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## INTRODUCTION TO 2nd EDITION.

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The question whether William Shakspeare's Will is holographic, is of singular interest, and not the least to the author of "The Gentle Shakspeare." It is a little remarkable that the critics and the great Shakspeare authorities who (some of them, happily not all) cheerfully combined in decrying this book, should have left this discovery, which completely confirms its arguments, to have been made by its unfortunate author. It is pleasing to think how this will gratify these worthy people; they cannot deny it; nor can they let it severely alone, for if they do it will be a tacit admission of the truth of it, and the majority of readers left to themselves will gladly accept it, for many love Shakspeare and hate his detractors, though they pretend to pose as the Poet's friends.

It is a very remarkable fact that up to this time there has been found no acknowledged or positive trace of the Poet's handwriting, excepting five signatures, all differing from each other, three on this Will, and two abbreviated signatures on a couple of deeds relating to a house in Blackfriars, of no importance, which the decryers of the great Poet may, fairly enough for them, as they always do when convenient, attribute to some other William Shakspeare; but they cannot get rid of the three signatures to the Will, for it was proved in due course and in solemn form by a well-known personage, Dr. Hall, and the Will shows that the Poet did possess a house in Blackfriars, which goes some way to include the other signatures; but that is a small circumstance, and can easily be explained away if desired.

Admitting that there is some little difficulty in establishing the validity of the Blackfriars signatures, the others afford a sort of proof that the Poet was just literate enough to sign his name. "Yes," it is said; "but after all, it was only a signature, and many clowns can write their own names;" and, indeed, they allege there

are indications which show how difficult it was for the Poet to accomplish even this small specimen of penmanship, for it may be clearly discerned (that is, clearly to them) that the lettering was previously written in pencil, possibly this was owing to his illness.

But assuming that the deed-signatures are explained away, this does not dispose of those upon the Will; they are poor specimens, no doubt. If written by a man in health he must have been, as it is asserted, a poor writer; but they are evidently written by a dying man, and they differ so materially from each other in the formation of the letters, especially the capitals, that it is quite impossible for anyone to pounce upon a letter and to compare it successfully with others in the body of the Will, yet this diversity, in the hands of a really clever specialist, may help in the solution of the question; for this curious fact comes to light, in fully considering the whole matter, that this diversity in the lettering is not confined to the signatures only, but is to be found throughout the three sheets of the Will. Compared each with the two others, it might be proved to the satisfaction of some experts (who insist upon finding exact similarities) that the three sheets were written by different scribes. Mr. Sidney Lee has invented an earlier draft of the Will, as well as a draughtsman. He asserts—without a shadow of proof—that Francis Collyns, the Warwick attorney, was “instructed” by the Poet to prepare the “first” draft. And if the captious critic insists that the sheets were written by different scribes, it will, of course, be asserted that Francis Collyns was assisted by two of his clerks, probably by three, for we know how he wrote himself, because he attested the Will; and it is impossible that the writer of his stiff, crabbed signature could have written in the bold and flowing style of the three clerks. Happily the proof that the Poet wrote his own Will does not rest entirely upon the evidence of experts. The general likeness, the style, the formation of the letters, however differing, go a great way towards establishing the proof of the proposition; but the more satisfactory and overwhelming proof, which must prevail, can be found in the circumstances attending the making of the Will, the consideration of which, and a very important part, is to be found in this book, “The Gentle Shakspeare.” The discovery of this single point gives the fullest authority to this work, which, indeed, is a

subject for congratulation to the author, and to all fair-minded people who agree with him.

It has long been a subject of enquiry whether the handwriting of the Poet is still in existence, and happily it would appear that this Will itself is his. When in America a few months since the author was asked by an eminent Shakspeare scholar where Shakspeare's handwriting was to be found, and he could only reply that in all probability it could be found in the library of the Elizabethan poet, Henry Ferrars, at Baddersly Clinton, whose family were feudal lords of the Shaksperes. If only a proper search could be made there, and if the Will is holographic, this can certainly be ascertained, and even if this search be impracticable, here is something to compare with other writings; and with this Will as a guide, there should be very little difficulty in discovering more of Shakspeare's true writing—it is next to impossible that it has entirely perished. Some of his friends and lovers, and he had many, must have cherished it, and even the drafts of some of his plays may be discovered; and once the standard is fixed, there will be less difficulty in making the search, and the result must be intensely interesting, for it will bring out more clearly his relations with the people, and the part he played in the affairs of that time. A curious and promising source of obtaining some of Shakspeare's autographs has recently appeared, but as suddenly has vanished, in the book of Irelands' forgeries lately sold by Puttick and Simpson to Mr. Albert Jackson, of Great Portland Street, on behalf of some foreign customer. It is extremely probable that some of these so-called forgeries would be genuine, and would be of priceless value. Unhappily the book has already left this country. The muniment rooms of Shakspeare's friends, and especially of those implicated in Cecil's invention—the Gunpowder Plot—should be carefully ransacked. There can be little doubt that the Poet himself was a "suspect," and as such banished from London. He had only just escaped the Essex "rebellion," which ended with that nobleman's life; but even Cecil's twenty years of resolute government had not given him the courage to prosecute. Besides that, the numerous friends and relations of the Poet, some in the highest positions, would make such a prosecution dangerous, if not impossible. It is singular that the idea that Shakspeare wrote his

own Will has never been broached, for many admirers of the Poet have seen it, and it has been carefully examined by eminent experts; but they do not seem to have thought of it. The author fell into the same error (see page 215). The text is stereotyped, so the blunder must remain. It is entirely owing to Messrs. Cassell that the author has been able to seize upon it. In their "Royal Shakspeare" (1897), published since "The Gentle Shakspeare," they have given a photograph of William Shakspeare's Will, and they have supplied the photographs here published from their own negatives. These are much larger and very superior to those published in "The Royal Shakspeare," which does not give so good an idea of the original writing of the great Poet. These photographs clearly indicate that the writer of the signatures was the scribe who wrote the Will, and the only question left, if this be the case, is whether the scribe wrote the signatures for the Testator, or whether the Will is not in fact holographic. The first hypothesis may be rejected safely, and the second supplies the great want, in itself a most extraordinary circumstance, that in this draft there is positive evidence of the Poet's handwriting.

There is a great difference which has to be accounted for between the writing of the signatures and that of the draft itself; but this is explained by the double date upon it, showing that some two months had elapsed since the preparation of the draft commenced and its execution as a Will—months during which the Will was written by instalments, and it is obvious from the contents that the Testator had lain on a bed of sickness; for although there are some few corrections—chiefly additions—to it, the old blunders of the writer had not been properly corrected, and so remain to the end. The Poet died on the 23rd of April, nearly a month after the execution of the Will—if the day of the month is accurate—but no attempt seems to have been made to alter it, or to retranscribe it—tolerable proof that the state of his mind did not permit him to reconsider it, and it was probably only in a fluttering of vital energy, which often occurs just before the end, that he was prevailed upon or desired to execute it, in its imperfect form, in order that an intestacy might not occur.

The question of date is a curious one, for that it was written

at an earlier period than the day on which it was signed is clear, because when it was originally written in the month of January, the regnal year was accurate; but if it was executed on the 25th of March or afterwards, it would be inaccurate. Neither that year nor the day has been corrected by the Testator. It, however, may be doubted whether the day of the month, which was left uncorrected, was the actual day when it was signed. It was certainly drafted on the 25th day of January, for the word "March" is interpolated after the month of "January" is struck out; and had the day of the month been omitted originally, both day and month would be written before the word "January" when it was struck out, unless, of course, both dates were the 25th.

It is hardly probable that the drafting and the execution should both occur on the same day (the 25th) of the month. It is more probable that the day was left in as immaterial, and to correct the regnal blunder, if it were noticed, the Christian year (1616) was added. Mr. Lee asserts positively that the "first" draft of the Will was drawn up before the 25th of January, 1615, a double error of grave importance. As a fact there was only one draft—the contents show this—and it was commenced upon the date given. The very first words written give the date, a most unusual circumstance for a draft. Drafts are never dated, though holographic wills generally are, and this circumstance probably suggested to Mr. Lee that this was not an original draft. Mrs. Stopes, who has copied much from Mr. Lee in the course of her original work, has, in copying Mr. Lee's assumptions as to "instructions," greatly improved upon them. She not only discovers that the Poet had several drafts of his Will, but that he had previously made several other wills. It is very greatly to be regretted that these great authorities will draw upon their imaginations for their facts, for though undoubtedly ingenious and plausible and very possibly accurate, there is not a scintilla of evidence to help them, and these misstatements (as in fact they are) create doubt and confusion. Mr. Lee proceeds to inform us that the later draft was ready for execution on the 25th of January, but "probably the Testator did not complete it till long afterwards, probably not till the time when it was executed." The question of the dates when the draft was made and when executed as a will are impor-

tant in considering the question of the Poet's state of health at the time. The handwriting clearly indicates that he was in better, if not in tolerable health, when he commenced the draft, though as he proceeded he rapidly deteriorated, and the contents of the Will prove that after the first few lines were written his mind and memory became defective—disturbed—confused, and incapable of carrying out logically its own conceptions.

This fact is patent, and it goes a long way in proof that the Will is holographic. The person who drafted the Will must have been in the same state of mind as the Testator who gave instructions for it, assuming that Mr. Lee is correct in his assertion that the Testator gave such instructions; but this hypothesis is most improbable—a half-demented Testator employing a draughtsman in a worse condition of mind is not even a probable guess. The Testator himself might be excused for allowing his feelings to overpower his reason; but a lawyer deliberately sitting down to write draft after draft has no such excuse. He was bound to be legal, accurate, and logical. The Will shows that the Testator was on friendly terms—probably very friendly terms—with Francis Collyns, the lawyer who attested it—hence Mr. Lee's unhappy guesses—so that he was not without legal assistance, nor is it likely that he should be so isolated for a space of several months. Nothing can be clearer than that Francis Collyns did not write the draft, for we have the clearest evidence of his handwriting in his own signature, which he appends first to the Will. His hand is a small, crabbed, tailless, lawyer-like hand, quite unlike that of the Poet, or whoever wrote the draft, which is in a large, bold, free hand, remarkably so for that period, and just such a hand as we should expect the Poet to employ. Since this was written it has been pointed out by Mr. A. H. Palmer, the learned author of the "History of Wrexham," that the capital "F" used by Francis Collyns is a very peculiar one for that period. Mr. Palmer is happily in accord with the author on this question, and especially with regard to the part taken by Francis Collyns in its composition. He agrees that Collyns did not draft the Will, and he thinks also that Shakspeare did. He also concurs in the view that Collyns wrote the paragraph relating to the performance of the Will. Mr. Palmer's suggestion is shown to be of value by comparing the signature, and especially the capital "F"

with that name in the Will. It is impossible that one hand wrote both. A man could hardly conceal his identity in writing his own name. F. Collyns, if he were the writer, could not have been a very modest character, for his name is mentioned in the place of honour amongst the first legatees, and he had the largest legacy of the Will. It is likely that the Testator might have so placed him; but it is extremely unlikely that he would have usurped so distinguished a place for himself, and this becomes less probable when it is remembered that the Testator had a near relative in the profession, Mr. Green, alias Shakspeare, the Town Clerk, with whom he had always acted in legal matters. Even when an attorney leaves to himself such unconsidered trifles as a "residue" in a Will, he usually occupies a more modest position. There can be little doubt that some of the corrections in the Will were made by Francis Collyns; his handwriting, so unlike the body of the draft, can clearly be detected, and, more than this, the substance of them is unlike the Testator, and more probably the work of an attorney. The phrase relative to Susannah "for better enabling of her to perform this my will and towards the performance thereof" is not only bad English, but is tautological, and indeed absurd, for it is wholly unnecessary. The property referred to was the bulk of the large property which Shakspeare had accumulated; all his lands and tenements of every kind, the legacies to be provided for were not a tithe of their value, and all this valuable estate was put into strict settlement. Had it been necessary to sell any portion of it to pay legacies, that portion should properly have been designated; indeed, it would have been more than sufficient to have added it to the bequest of the residue, which was amply sufficient, rather than to disturb a very strict entail. This seems to be almost the only instance where legal knowledge was at fault or legal terms misapplied, and it will gratify the believers in Shakspeare's legal knowledge to see that the mistakes are not his. Fancy the greatest Master of English, writing or "instructing" such a correction for the purpose "of enabling of" his daughter in her duties. The difference between this writing and that of the draft is again apparent in a comparatively small matter, but one of some importance. Shakspeare was not a trained lawyer, and seldom used abbreviations as all lawyers do, with the exception of the

word "and," which the writer of the draft almost invariably indicates by a sign like the letter C, and "with." When Shakspeare wrote the word "and" in full, it was always at the beginning of a sentence, and he invariably so wrote it. The only instance to the contrary would be on the assumption that Dr. Furnivall was correct in writing son "and" daughter, but this fact militates against this assumption, if, indeed, it requires any evidence to dispose of it. Now Francis Collyns begins one of his corrections with an abbreviated "and," and he follows it up with a variety of abbreviations. Of course the critics will say this is mere special pleading; if they do it will only show that they had no more true appreciation of that great science than had the goths who destroyed it by means of the Judicature Acts.

If neither the Poet nor Mr. Collyns drafted this Will, who did? We must find another person equally demented with the Testator. Is it probable that there were two of them? This question may safely be answered in the negative, for happily there is internal evidence in the draft itself, which not only shows that it was a first draft, but also that the hand that wrote it was that of the mind that dictated it. In the seventh line, at the very commencement of the operative part, there is a very important correction which could only have been made by the Testator himself, who thought the will out as he wrote it. Would Shakspeare have written out instructions for himself? This correction shows that he did not. The first bequest began in these words:—"I give and bequeath unto my son-in-L." The expression intended "son-in-law" is furiously struck out before full completion, and it continues "daughter Judith," written without a break or interlineation. Dr. Furnivall, who edited this edition, has taken the very grave liberty to substitute for the words struck out, "sonne and," which is alike offensive to common sense and law. The writer knew perfectly well how to describe his son-in-law (see line 96 referring to Dr. Hall), and it is besides quite impossible to make "and" out of "in L." Shakspeare always wrote his intermediate "ands" by a sign, and the final letter is very clearly an "L" (see lines 20, 80, 85, 94, 95, 96, and 98, especially 96, where "son-in-law" appears).

As a fact it makes no difference in the argument whether Dr. Furnivall has blundered or not, for at the date of the draft of the

Will, Judith was not married (if she were first married on the 10th of February following), and this very clearly confirms the author's suggestion that the Poet's death was not caused by a merrymaking with Ben Jonson and his fellows over this marriage, as the great Shaksperian authorities insist, a thing most unlikely, since she was disinherited seventeen days previously, but through the agony of mind occasioned by Judith's marriage the Testator received so great a shock, and in consequence was so confused that he was evidently under the impression that she was already married, and the premature birth of her first child probably accounts for her condition which induced the marriage in February, when he lay apparently on his deathbed. This may have been celebrated as a legal precaution, and, of course, in this case there may have been a previous secret marriage, not improbable amongst Catholics, but if so, it was of a doubtful character. The law of England, like that of Scotland, was very loose until the Marriage Acts, and it was, and still is so in Scotland, when at this day it is sometimes rather difficult to determine whether a couple are really married.

But whatever doubt there may be upon the marriage question, it is quite clear that Judith's conduct was the cause of the making of this Will, in which she is the main figure, and that it was her marriage which was so utterly distasteful to her father; for not only does he cut her off with a very slender portion, but the terms of the Will are actually insulting to his unnamed son-in-law; for having struck him out of the Will, into which he had begun to introduce him, he appears to ignore his existence; and excepting a marriage portion of £100, the smallest he could probably give her, in order to prevent her from making any claim upon his executors, and a sum of £50, the consideration money for her rights in a small copyhold which he could not ignore, since her husband's tenure by the courtesy probably loomed in the distance, and there could have been no settlement to control his rights, or this clause would have been unnecessary. These two sums he left to his daughter unfettered, so that her husband would obtain them in her right; and he proceeds to leave her a further legacy of £150, by which he was not to benefit in any case, and which was to be tied up strictly, so that her husband should not touch it or have any control over it—an interesting early bequest of money

given to the wife's separate use, showing that the Poet fully understood the doctrines of equity as well as of law. The interest of this sum was to be applied for her benefit and for that of her issue, if either should be living at the end of three years after her decease; but if not, then the principal was to be divided between the Testator's granddaughter and his sister, but if Judith survived that period, the interest was to be paid to her for her life, independently of any husband she should then be married unto, "or at anie" (time?) "after"; but the stock was not to be paid to her during her marriage, though it would apparently be hers if her husband died; but then only for life if she had issue. Then followed a proviso that if "the husband to whom she would be married at the end of three years or afterwards (a curious bequest, seeing that she was already married) should sufficiently assure to his daughter and her issue lands answerable to the portion given to her," the £150 should be given to the said husband for his own use. In other words, that the husband was to derive no benefit whatever from the bequest; but he might probably invest it in land for his wife and her children's benefit, but this only in the event of his living for three years, and his wife and children also surviving; for if they died previously the money went to the Testator's granddaughter and his sister, a most confused and complicated arrangement, when it might have been bequeathed in a simple manner. Then, after giving £20 to his sister, her only legacy if Judith or her children survived for three years—a very small provision for so rich a man—though he leaves her a house rent free—probably the Rowington copyhold—he gives her three sons (only two of whom he can recollect by name, after two months' consideration) £5 apiece, to be paid within one year after his decease; and then follows directions concerning the investment of some legacy, of which there appears to be no bequest, which is afterwards followed by a bequest of his plate, and there is a correction of the word "her," substituting for it "the said Elizabeth Hall," which shows that the previous undeveloped bequest was also intended for his granddaughter. The Testator appears at this point, and before he proceeded further with the draft, to have discovered his mistake, for he partially corrects it by striking out the clause

as to the investment for his granddaughter's benefit of the legacies left to his nephews. It is possible that the Testator was intending to provide for the investment of Elizabeth Hall's £100, mentioned in the first part of the complicated bequest; if not, he evidently forgot to leave her anything, for she is not mentioned again as a specific legatee of money. The curious thing is that the person who drafted this Will was evidently a skilled lawyer, for his phraseology and use of legal terms is accurate; he has only muddled them together. This shows that the Will was not written from instructions, for in that case the bequests would be set out separately, and not run into each other; so that these propositions seem to follow that the person who gave the instructions and the draughtsman were, if different persons, both of unsound mind, memory, and understanding; but that in fact there was only one person involved in drawing the Will, which is clear from the corrections which were made whilst the Will was being drafted, and which are easily distinguishable from those which were made afterwards, and which are clearly in the handwriting of Francis Collyns.

There are several corrections in the Will, some of which seem to have been made at the time of drawing the Will, whilst others were evidently interpolated afterwards. In the first page, line 33, there is a very proper correction which would commend itself to an accurate mind. The words "by my executors and overseers" are struck out, and properly introduced at line 31, for they govern the sentence. This was probably done by the Testator at the time, for though the writing is shaky, it is very similar to the context, which at this portion of the Will may be so described; indeed the writing of the draft varies very considerably in parts, as if the writer grew exhausted, or recommenced his work when he was much weaker. Lines 29 to 44 are especially weak, and in a smaller hand, and badly written. The second sheet appears to mark another effort, for it starts with a bolder hand, which is continued to the end, although the two first lines, 45 and 46, seem to differ from the rest. It is here that occurs the mistake of mixing up the bequest to the Harts with the investment of the granddaughter's portion; and it may well be that the Testator left off at the Harts bequest and fell into the error as to his granddaughter

on recommencing. There are two corrections in line 50 which probably were made at different times. The first, changing "her" into "the said Elizabeth Hall," was probably made at the time when the clause relating to her was struck out, which was very possibly when the Testator discovered his mistake, and the other correction, "except my brod-silver and gilt bole," was probably made after the bequest of that article in line 93 (this is perhaps indicated by a blot), and it was wholly unnecessary, and therefore was probably the work of Francis Collins. The first correction, as the word "of" shows, and the changes in the legacy of rings would appear to be made by Mr. Collins. The last addition, that of the bequest of the second best bed to his wife, is, however, very clearly in the Poet's feeblest hand, and exactly corresponds with the signature below it. It is more like his signature appended to the Will, but it is not unlike the handwriting of the draft; in fact it is a golden link between them, of the utmost value, in proof that one hand wrote them both. This correction was evidently the last made, and it is a touching proof that the great soul of the Poet inclined to her who had been the bane of his life, and who was probably the cause of the sad catastrophe which no doubt resulted in his death; and that so shortly before the end, that he was incapable at this time of making any serious alteration in the disposition of his property had he been so disposed. This inability is evident from the defects unremedied in his Will, and especially from the omissions relating to his investments, and to the mention of his best friends, which are apparent. The author has indicated in "The Gentle Shakspeare" that this Will is a terrible one, and unlike every action of his life, and every sentiment in his works. It was doubtless made in the agony of a terrible grief, which overpowered his reason, and from which he was never able to shake himself free. That such a draft was ever executed at all, is due, probably, to his imperious will, no one having dared to suggest to him in his then sad condition to have it put into other shape, and obviously the best thing that could be done was to have it executed as it was, and it is very fortunate that Mr. Collins's amendments were so limited in their operations, or he would probably have upset the Testator's desires.

It will be asked doubtless upon what does the author base his

alleged discovery of Shakspeare handwriting? Where are the proofs? Upon which letters does he rely?

The answer to this may seem foolish to some; but it is a sufficient answer to an honest enquirer; it cannot be pretended that positive proof, irrespective of the contents of the Will, can be obtained from the writing itself; but there is such a strong general resemblance in the handwriting, making due allowances for the weakness of approaching death, that, coupled with the circumstances attending the execution of this draft, and the conclusive evidence of its contents, there can be no reasonable doubt about it.

It must not, however, be said that there are actually no similarities in the handwriting of the draft and signatures, for they are numerous and unmistakable; but it must be frankly admitted that apart from the extrinsic evidence, it would be dangerous to depend upon them alone; but this will strike the candid enquirer, that if the lettering does not exactly coincide either with the signatures or with the draft, not only do those signatures differ considerably from each other (no two being alike), but the lettering of the draft is also widely different. Compare the two letters S of the first line one with the other, and with the S of line 27; the last is like the signature of the Will, sheet No. 3, the two first with that of sheet 2, but none of them agree with the S's of the heading of the Will, "S Wmi Shakspeare," nor do those two S's agree with each other or with any of the other S's of the Will or signatures. Mr. Furnivall has again taken the liberty of changing the first "S" of this last sentence, "S Wmi Shakspeare" into "T"; he evidently has no knowledge of Elizabethan handwriting, or of law, or he could not fall into such an error. Shakspeare's "T" is quite a different letter, and always written in the same manner (see lines 3, 53, 57, and 98), nor is there anything gained, but the contrary, by making the change. S stands for "Signatura" or perhaps for "Syngrapha," and not for Testament. William Shakspeare himself endorses it as his Will, as this is, and not as a "Testament," which at that date was different from a mere Will, but if the word "Signature" or "Sign-manual" is lost, it is difficult to say whether the first sheet is signed. There is a feeble scrawl at the bottom of it, which was probably meant for a signature; but—and it is an additional reason for believing this to be holographic—if the sig-

nature at the top of the sheet was that of the Poet, it was unnecessary, and if it were not that of the Poet, this sheet is not fully signed. It is not curious that the Poet's name in this first signature was not spelt in his usual way, but "Shackspeare," for many people at that date varied the spelling of their own names, even in the same document, and the name is clearly so written in the first line of the Will, and probably was so intended in line 92, though it is there clearly altered (if ever written otherwise) to "Shakspere," and so are the signatures to the Will and the two signatures at the bottom of sheets 2 and 3, and also the two endorsements, one of which was probably made by Shakspere himself. It is again difficult to understand how Mr. Furnivall can have printed in the translation the signature of "Shakspeare"—in fact he has made two mistakes, for in the Will it is written Shakspere," or possibly, though not certainly "Shackspere," with the "c." The two deeds relating to the Blackfriars house each clearly give the name as spelt "Shakspere," and very curiously these signatures differ just as do the signatures of the Will. The Deed of the 10th of March has a "W" exactly like that of the second sheet of the Will; whilst that of the 11th (the mortgage) has the "W" of the signature to the Will—again showing how the Poet varied his handwriting. In a book (Rustall's "Collection in English of the Statutes of the Realm," 1598) accidentally purchased by Mr. Charles William Hird, of Portland Chambers, London, in 1852, there is the signature "W. Shakspere," which has many of the characteristics of the Poet's Will, and of his signatures, although it again differs in some respects; but, like the writing of the Will, it is in a very large hand, and there seems every reason to believe that it is a genuine signature. In a question of such difficulty, one is glad to have every particle of evidence available, and the author is grateful to Mr. Hird for permitting him to compare this signature. The "W" of Mr. Hird's signature is singularly like that of the signatures to the Will, but the "S" is quite different; it contains that curious "r" after the "W" which is found in the Montaigne signature (which is very much like in many particulars), especially with regard to the formation of the letters "s" and "p," which indicate that when at his best the Poet wrote a very beautiful hand—large and flowing. The draft of the Will

shows a great deterioration as it proceeds; the first sheet is very superior to the two last. The first thirty lines of the first sheet are the best written, and the writer would seem to have broken off here just as he concluded the bequest of Judith's £150 to his granddaughter and his sister, in case of her death within three years, when he recommences. "But if my said daughter Judith be living at the end of the said three years or any issue of her body" he wrote clearly, but then he becomes actually unintelligible, and his writing, hitherto so clear and plain, is at fault. "The" (no doubt meant for "then") "my Will ys"—then two dots one above the other, the latter of which may mean his abbreviation of "and"—"soe I devise and bequeath"—then a word which has been altered and is quite illegible, though of course Dr. Furnivall can read it as "the," in fact it may mean anything. From this place the writing is nearly illegible, and the writer probably stopped here altogether, and only resumed the writing at a later period.

Now if this Will was made by the Testator himself, it is just at this juncture that he would break down. No doubt he loved this erring child, his youngest daughter, probably the chief companion of his banishment, but he was uncertain whether she was really married, and her marriage within three weeks of this date clearly shows that there was very grave doubt about it. Her mother was said to be in a consumption, and so probably was it feared that this child was equally weak, and the early deaths of her children seem to show that this was the case. How otherwise can the curious period of three years be accounted for? Obviously the father did not think that his child would survive her confinement, or that her issue would survive. The money he left her would suffice to maintain her in the rank of life to which she had lowered herself by her foolish marriage, and her sister and Dr. Hall might be depended upon to make her comfortable; but he was determined that his unmentionable son-in-law should not benefit by it, and the after life of that man, even with all the advantages of this marriage (probably very great to him), shows him to have been a worthless fellow, and this the Poet doubtless foresaw. Who can blame the father that he acted with severity towards the man who had destroyed his hopes? A foolish reviewer in the "Era" recently has, in admitting this view to be possible, reviled the Poet's memory with

indecent severity, calling him "a revengeful lunatic," a new term of critical art, for lunatics are not generally credited with responsibility for their actions, and this is strange, for in a review of "The Gentle Shakspeare" a year or two since, the same paper reviewed it in a fair and gentlemanly manner, with an absence of spite and with acknowledgment of its value. It is curious how readily reviewers can change their views.

The fact that the father was unable to proceed with drafting the Will when the possibility of his child surviving occurred to him shows how deeply he felt it; he had evidently overlooked the possibility of her surviving, or he would not have interposed the ultimate bequest of this money to others until he had disposed of her interest in it; and without striking those bequests out, as the draughtsman should have done, he went on to make other dispositions which rendered them valueless. It is another proof that the Will was not made from written instructions, but was written as the Testator's thoughts arose, and the bitter feeling they created actually stopped him in his work. Would a mere draughtsman be so affected? Assuredly not; this painful contingency would not affect him in the least, though it overwhelmed the poor stricken father.

The remainder of the first sheet is written in a very feeble manner; it lacks the flourishes and embellishments of the first part, and much of it is hardly legible. The last line is especially bad, the word "under" the yearly rent is a mere guess of Dr. Furnivall's, and the last word, which of course Dr. Furnivall gives as "bequeath," is, per se, quite illegible, though it is an easy guess from the form and style of the writing. The signature at the bottom of this page opposite to the last line would seem to have been written at the same time; but probably the Testator abandoned it, as a signature, when he placed "S" before his name opposite the first line, which Mr. Furnivall improperly reads "T." It is most singular that none of the historians of the "Poet" have ever noticed the peculiarities of this draft, which cannot be accounted for, unless the contentions of "The Gentle Shakspeare" are fully admitted, and unless it was the work of the Poet himself.

The fact that there are so many stages in the draft shows, not only that it was written at different periods, but also that the

writer was under different conditions as to health; and this gives the strongest presumption that the Will was holographic. Mr. Collyns's clerks, had it been written by them, would have written the whole in the same style, for they would not have been affected by emotion at the parts which would naturally touch the Testator, and their handwriting would be lawyerlike and crabbed, free from the long tails which run into other lines and confuse the words—in other words, more professional and businesslike. Painful as it is to read this Will, for it shows agony of mind in every line, there is yet a satisfaction to see the handwriting of this great man, and to know what it was like. We know from his contemporaries how rapidly he wrote; this draft proves it. It is generally said of handwriting that character can be detected from it, and assuredly the observation is true in this case. Mr. Sidney Lee is not ashamed to reproduce the Rev. H. Ward's scandal about the drinking bout between Shakspeare, Michael Drayton, and Ben Jonson, with its illogical conclusion. "It seems," he writes "(the Poet) drank too hard, for Shakspeare died of a feavour then contracted." It is a novelty for a feavour to be contracted at a merry meeting, and it is strange, if the cause of his illness could be described, that his son-in-law, who most probably attended him—the Will proves that they were on excellent terms—has left no details, but, in fact, such an account could not be given without publishing a painful scandal—terrible to the widow and to one if not to both of their daughters, though now so far removed in date that its consideration affects no one. It is certainly an important problem. Mr. Lee drags in at this juncture (page 272) the ridiculous story of the drinking bout at Bidford, which has already been discredited. It probably had no more foundation than Mr. Ward's malicious story. Mr. Ward was vicar of Stratford, and if Shakspeare had been a Protestant he, or perhaps his predecessor, would surely have visited him in his illness, and tried to console him, instead of slandering him after his death; but whilst reproducing this scandal, Mr. Lee dismisses contemptuously as "idle gossip" the statement of the Venerable Archdeacon, the Rev. Mr. Davis, that he died a Catholic. The Archdeacon is courteously alluded to as "Davis," whilst his "idle gossip" was his idea of a biographical notice which he only added to the work of another.

If he had recorded that the Poet was an agnostic or a Nonconformist, no doubt Mr. Lee would have hailed it as a gospel truth, so difficult is it for some people to appreciate facts which run counter to their own views or wishes. Of course Mr. Lee gives full utterance to the libels Mr. Davis refers to respecting the Poet's unlucky poaching experiences; these, of course, are not mere gossip. Mr. Lee is right in his views respecting the religious exordium of the Will; it was doubtless conventional phraseology; but it is at least satisfactory that the Poet adopted it, for it shows that he was not an agnostic. The infidels of the period would have rejected it altogether, whilst a Catholic could surely adopt it, without, however, distinguishing his faith from that of the Protestant dissenters around him. Indeed, it was a Protestant form which could be adopted by anyone, even a true Catholic. It is as unmeaning as the nonsense proposed to be put in the mouth of the King in lieu of the present blasphemous Coronation Oath, either of which can be taken by any agnostic without the smallest reservation.

If, as it is confidently suggested, the Will is holographic, it establishes satisfactorily the fact that the Poet was a believer in the Christian religion, and that he possessed a considerable knowledge of law, as Lord Campbell and many writers have asserted, and as his plays indicate: his known contempt for the Puritans and his neglect of the services of the Vicar of Stratford show that he belonged to no sectary, and to no State Church blessed by the Popedom of foolish King Jamie.

One satisfactory fact to be learnt from this Will is that Shakspeare retained to the last some knowledge of Latin; the first two lines are in that language. This disposes of Dr. Farmer's ridiculous assertion that the Poet did not know any Latin, and it is consistent with the common and most probable idea that the Poet remained at the Grammar School as its usher. People seem to forget that the Poet placed on the title page of "Venus and Adonis," assuming that he printed it, a Latin motto from Ovid, whose influence is apparent in many details of the work, though possibly, like the rest of his printed works, the issue of it may have been a piracy.

Mr. Sidney Lee's evidence of identification of the Poet's wife with Agnes, daughter of Richard Hatheway, is amusing, and shows

how such writers confuse their own notions with evidence of facts. It is quite true, as he states, that Agnes and Ann were sometimes used for the same person; but it was not invariable, and the chances are against such an identity; but assuming it possible, what evidence is there of the identity of Agnes, daughter of Richard Hatheway, with the Poet's wife? The house at Shottery, now called Ann Hatheway's Cottage, undoubtedly belonged to the Hatheway family; but there is not a tittle of proof that the Poet's wife ever had any connection with it, and the pious belief has been created apparently to secure American dollars, for which it is very convenient.

The most surprising mistake of Mr. Sidney Lee is with regard to the marriage of Ann Hatheway with the Poet; he admits that the bond signed upon the 27th of November, 1582, by two Shottery husbandmen, did relate to the Poet, for he could not deny it, and it is absolutely clear that this bond was entered into in consequence of a license having been taken out the previous day by someone for the marriage of William Shakspeare and Ann Whately, of Temple Grafton. This was a necessary consequence, or indeed part of the license, but the yokels who signed the bond, if, indeed, they obtained the license, of which there is no evidence, dare not give a false name for the bride, and it was far more probable that the license was obtained by the intelligent rustics, who were forcing the lad into this outrageous marriage, than that he exposed the fact of his boyhood by a personal application. Boys of 18 do occasionally "love" women ten years their senior, but no "love" could have existed for a woman in the unfortunate condition of Ann Hatheway. The lad's feelings as "a man of honour" were no doubt played upon to induce him to take this dreadful step—a step which no doubt embittered his whole life, though so noble a soul as his could not be permanently ruined by it. It was to be expected that the false name would be adopted to deceive the parents, and prevent discovery of the marriage of their son with a fallen woman of Shottery, and no doubt, in spite of the deceit, a good marriage could be fastened upon the bridegroom by means of it; for, of course, he was party to the fraud; yet Mr. Lee actually suggests that there were two William Shaksperes, one who got a license without entering into a bond, to marry Ann

Whately, and the Poet, who forged the license and married Ann Hatheway on the strength of the bond. A more foolish suggestion it is impossible to conceive. Mr. Lee's mistake with regard to the drafting of the Will before the 25th of January, is a trifle compared with this blunder, which exhibits as much folly as the alleged drafting of the Will by Francis Collyns shows recklessness of assertion. It is more remarkable that Mr. Lee can discover another William Shakspeare so easily and conveniently for his argument, but when it is requisite to find a duplicate to disconnect the Poet or his father with any unpleasant or absurd position he is unable to discover one. Surely the suggestion of a duplicate William when there was no possibility of finding one, absurd though it is, should teach Mr. Lee the danger of appropriating to the Poet or his father all the petty and disagreeable acts committed by others of their names.

Mr. Sidney Lee's inability to deal with facts is amusing; he misstates the clear provisions of the Will; he writes that the Testator devised the tenement in Chapel Lane to his daughter Judith, and all the lands except this tenement to his other daughter, whereas he left no tenement to Judith, and gave her £50 to surrender her interest in it to her sister. Mr. Lee again asserts that he left the Henley Street house to his sister Joan. As a fact, he specifically devised both of the Henley Street houses to his daughter Susannah; but he left Joan a tenement for her life only at 12d. rent. Where this was does not appear by the Will, but it was probably the cottage in Chapel Lane, which he had strictly no right to dispose of, but having got rid of Judith's rights by his bequest, he probably trusted to his daughter Susannah to leave her aunt unmolested. Mrs. Stopes, of course, copies Mr. Lee in these blunders also, showing the great value of her independent research, and she is ungrateful enough, after borrowing, not to give Mr. Lee the credit, or rather the discredit of them.

Perhaps Mr. Lee thinks that John Shakspeare had three houses in Henley Street, but there is only proof of the acquisition of two of them, and this long after the first John Shakspeare (in 1552) was fined for an obstruction, and indeed long after the Poet's birth, who, judging from his father's description in proving his father's administration, which was done probably very shortly be-

fore if not after his marriage, did not occur at Stratford, and certainly not at the so-called birthplace, but at Snitterfield, and there is very little doubt that the early baptisms of "John Shakspeare's" children at Stratford were not the issue of the Poet's father and Mary Arden, but of one of the other John Shaksperes. Mr. Lee sees this difficulty and assumes that the Poet's father kept up the Snitterfield home at the time when he was residing at Stratford.

This is no doubt a painful suggestion for the American public, and may affect the general flow of dollars, but for all that it is plausible, though it must be admitted that it is not so strong as the doubt respecting Ann Hatheway's Cottage, which appears to be an untenable assumption.

There can, of course, be no objection to Mrs. Stopes describing her work as a mere collection of bricks; but it is to be regretted that as a collector she can only reward the author for the numerous "bricks" which she had borrowed from his collection, with a characteristic sneer. In the original article—for, like Mr. Sidney Lee, her book has grown out of an article—in "The Shaksperian"—she made and now reprints the elegant remark that "Mr. Yeatman has studied the Court Rolls of this period, and it is to be wished he had published his book in two volumes, one of facts and one of opinions." No doubt it would be more convenient for the brick-collector, but it would be more desirable for the reader if the origin of the bricks were clearly stated, even with Mr. Yeatman's despised opinions; for without reference to the source from which it is obtained the reader is often left in the dark. It cannot be said that Mrs. Stopes has wholly omitted her obligations to the author in her later volume. Several out of very many facts are admitted to be taken from his book, but the impertinences might very well have been omitted, though no doubt they will be palatable to those critics who revel in abuse of all kinds; but perhaps the most amusing thing, as a literary curiosity, is that Mr. Sidney Lee, who has also made copious use of Mr. Yeatman's bricks, and of some of his arguments—which he has spoilt by his ignorance of law—has not given him any credit whatever, nor on the other hand has he abused him, but as he was bound to account for the changes and important additions made to his article, gives Mrs. Stopes the credit of them, though he knew perfectly well the source from

which she had borrowed them. In his own article he refers to the author's letters to the "Times"—truly literary pirates were not peculiar to Shakspeare's period.

There is still ample work to be done by the brick-collector, for, with all the fussy pretensions of the great Shakspeare authorities, this work has not been even properly commenced; possibly some of the Shakspeare wills in the Worcester Probate Register have been examined, but the history of a family is not to be found solely in its own testaments, and much more frequently it is to be found in the wills of others not known to be connected with them. The author has only been able to afford a few days' search there, and then his attention was directed to other objects, whilst there is an inexhaustible supply of material, to which some attention might be devoted by some of the fussy societies which spend their funds in feasting and complimenting each other upon being the saviours of Shakspeare, whatever that means.

The author, in a more recent search, came across a couple of Rowington wills, of the Couper family, which, if followed up properly, might lead to much interesting evidence upon the important point of the identity of Richard Shakspeare, of Wroxall, with the grandfather of the Poet, to the further discomfiture of the Rev. Mr. Stokes, of Cambridge, who so unkindly attempted and so egregiously failed to break the author's links by some chains of his own of a very rotten material. There is an important will of Wm. Cowper, of Rowington, dated 15th of January, 2 Eliz., by which he devised the property called Chadwins or Chatwins (which had been held by the Shaksperes under the Ferrars family, of Baddersly Clinton, as early as 1389), and probably, if access could be obtained to the Ferrars Records and MSS., it would be found that they were even earlier tenants of the family.

Ralfe Shakspeare held these lands at his death in 1464, and he appears to have left coheirs—Elizabeth, his daughter and coheir, a widow in 1506, then held these lands; Isolda, wife of Robert Kakley (her sister and coheir). It was probable that the Couper family succeeded to this property from one or other of the coheirs of Ralfe Shakspeare. Alys Couper, widow, by will dated 1558, left a legacy to Alys Shakspeare, probably Alys Griffin, and she appointed Richard Shakspeare her overseer, adding, "I desire Richard Shak-

sperre to be overseer of this my will in whom I put my trust to see it truly performed and done." It would seem that in all probability this was Richard Shaksperre the seneschal under Henry Ferrars, of the Priory of Wroxall, now ignorantly called the Abbey, and this would show that both Richard, and Alys Griffin his wife, survived to the age of Queen Elizabeth. The same year John Hill, of Rowington, by his will appointed Richard Shaksperre "the Weaver" his overseer. This description was added probably to distinguish him from Richard Shaksperre the ex-seneschal. In 1574 John Shaxper of Rowington left a legacy to Catherine Cooper, and his goods were prized by William Cooper. It is very greatly to be regretted that the MSS. of the Ferrars family are not accessible in order to clear up these relationships, though possibly a full search at Worcester Probate Registry might give the evidence. In 1560, not very many years after the dissolution of Wroxall Priory, Richard Shaksperre was a tenant of the Ardens at Snitterfield, and there can be but little doubt that he was the overseer of the will of Alys Cooper, the father of John Shaksperre, who married Mary Arden.

But if Mr. Sidney Lee's excursions into the legal field show him to be an inaccurate and indifferent performer, the main purport of his work is open to even greater reproach, not merely on account of its sins of commission, but of those of omission. His work sets out with the pretence of being "a plain and practical narrative of the great dramatist's personal history." Plain it is, but it is most unpractical. He sought "to provide students with a full record of the duly attested facts and dates of their Master's career." Now facts are one thing, dates quite another; and Mr. Lee's work is singularly deficient in both. Upon the greatest of all the events of his eventful career—his retirement from London and the date of it—Mr. Lee is entirely silent. Surely this is a very grave omission, which deprives this work of any pretension to be a complete biography, so that the great work of biography has yet to be attempted. The author has never attempted to supply this want by his own work. He has only touched upon certain legal points affecting the Poet's career. At the death of Queen Elizabeth Shaksperre was still living in London, making a very fine income as actor and manager, and of course as playwright, probably not less

than £1,000 a year, an immense income at that date. Why did he leave London and when? Mr. Lee (page 257) asserts that Shakspeare abandoned dramatic composition in 1611, but why? and where are the indications which he hints at in support of his proposition? "He left," writes Mr. Lee dogmatically, "with the manager of his company unfinished drafts of more than one play," "which others were summoned at a later date to finish." Where is there any proof of this? This is interesting, but it would be instructive if Mr. Lee had condescended to give his proofs. Mr. Lee takes a very low and commonplace view of the Poet's hopes and aspirations, and he quotes with approbation Pope's weak and malicious lines, "For gain not glory winged his roving flight, and grew immortal in his own despite." Mr. Lee writes, "He seemed unconscious of his marvellous superiority to his professional comrades," and he caps this nonsense with the absurd remark, "His literary attainments and successes were chiefly valued as serving the prosaic end of providing permanently for himself and his daughters." If this were true it is surely still more extraordinary that he should give up the chief source of his income. Tradition informs us, it is all the proof there is, that the Poet continued to work till his death, whilst dwelling at Stratford, and there appears to be no proof of Shakspeare's company performing in London after the year 1605, or taking up any of his unfinished plays, even if the Poet would allow it. It is rather curious that after this date, the period of the greatest importance in his literary life, nothing seems to have been recorded of the Poet's residence in London. There was a subsidy in the 3rd of James which would have caught him, as the last subsidy of Elizabeth included him in St. Helen's, Bishopsgate Street, but his name apparently is not found in the subsidies for that year, and the reason is obvious that for some cause he had ceased to live in London. His name is not to be found with those of his fellow actors (most of whom were Catholics) for receiving communion, according to law, in the parish of St. Saviours. Amongst them was the worthy man Ben Jonson, who, after killing Gabriel Spencer the actor in a duel, in 1593, and who found himself in the Marshalsea, under sentence of death, became a convert to Romanism, owing doubtless to the company of several priests who were in the same plight for the more serious offence

of practising their religion, and this excellent time-server, to show his great respect for the new religion, took the cup at the so-called sacrament and brutally emptied it of its contents. The late Mr. Richard Simpson, M.A., in his excellent work, so ably edited and expounded by the Rev. H. S. Bowden, gives many very suggestive notions which may account for more than has been generally suspected; but which is quite consistent with the fact that the Poet was a Catholic. Certain it is that his chief friends and patrons, many of whom were his relations, belonged to the Catholic faith, and he had a very close connection with the so-called conspirators upon whom Cecil so adroitly sprung "The Gunpowder Plot," which it is not unlikely was his own invention, created in order to enable him to destroy the Catholics, because King James, through Cecil's persecution of the Catholics, was, like his predecessor, becoming truly obnoxious to the country. Cecil was actually wringing from them for the Treasury some £360,000 a year. James was a very weak man, and had he given way, in all probability Cecil and the other devout Protestants, who had gorged themselves with Church property, might have been called upon to disgorge it. This convenient stalking horse of No Popery had always been sufficient—as it was in the Revolution of 1688—to drive the people out of their senses, and so to obtain a fresh lease of Church revenues, under the pretence of fostering liberty. Shakspeare had undoubtedly committed himself by something like complicity with the conspirators, for in both "Julius Cæsar" and "Hamlet" he had invoked sympathy on their behalf, and his historical plays were exercising a certain influence upon the populace. For a long time he must as a Catholic have been an object of suspicion to Cecil, not merely on account of his relationship and friendship with Southampton and Essex, but for his personal connection with so many of the malcontents. Late in Elizabeth's reign political troubles were rising, and Shakspeare's part in them leaves no doubt as to his sympathies. "The English people," writes Simpson (page 99) "had become disgusted with Elizabeth and Cecil's tyranny, and the Queen was hated by Papists and Puritans alike. Of both these parties the Earl of Essex was the hope and champion, for he was known on the one hand to be in correspondence with the Pope, and on the other he openly advocated religious

toleration. The supporters of Essex, to avoid suspicion, held their deliberations at Derby House, the residence of Lord Southampton, Shakspeare's patron. Some means were, however, needed to stir the popular discontent, and to familiarise the public mind with the idea, if not of deposing Elizabeth, at least of making Essex practically supreme. At that time political movements were not begotten by theories, arguments on the rights of the people, abstract principles, but by precedents, privileges, and charters. An example was then required of how a tyrannical, usurping Sovereign might be coerced, and this was furnished by Shakspeare's "Richard II." Dr. Hayward had already composed, with the same end, a history of the deposition of that monarch, and had dedicated it to Essex, but it was altogether too dry and prosaic for the stage. Shakspeare's play presents the same theme and moral, cast in dramatic form. The play of "Richard II." was declared treasonable on the following heads (Dom. Eliz. Vol. 225, No. 25): The selection of a story 200 years old in order to demonstrate the misgovernment of the Crown, the corruption and the covetousness of the Council, the promotion of unworthy favourites, oppression of the nobles, and the excessive taxation of the people, exacted professedly to prosecute the suppression of the Irish rebellion, but in fact to line the pockets of the Sovereign.

The following extracts will show how exactly these objections apply to Shakspeare's plays:—

Now for the rebels which stand out in Ireland.  
 Expedient manage must be made . . . .  
 We will ourselves in person to this war:  
 And for our coffers—with too great a court  
 And liberal largess—are grown somewhat light,  
 We are enforced to farm our royal realm.  
 . . . . if that come short,  
 Our substitutes at home shall have blank charters;  
 Whereto, when they shall know what men are rich,  
 They shall subscribe them with large sums of gold,  
 And send them after to supply our wants.

Richard wishes his uncle, John of Gaunt, a speedy death when

The lining of his coffers shall make coats  
 To deck our soldiers for these Irish wars.

And he carried out his threat, too, by seizing all the "plate, coin, revenues, and moveables." The old Duke had told him that

A thousand flatterers sit within thy crown  
Whose compass is no bigger than thy hand;  
And yet encaged in so small a verge  
The waste is no whit lesser than thy land.

We may easily fancy with what excitement the conversation of Northumberland, Ross, and Willoughby would be listened to by the favourers of Essex.

*North.* Now afore heaven 'tis shame such wrongs are borne.  
The King is not himself, but basely led  
By flatterers; and what they will inform,  
Merely in hate, 'gainst any of us all,  
That will the King severely prosecute  
'Gainst us, our lives, our children, and our peers.  
*Ross.* The Commons hath he fitted with grievous taxes,  
And lost their hearts; the nobles hath he fined  
For ancient quarrels, and quite lost their hearts.  
*Willo.* And daily new exactions are devised;  
As blanks, benevolences, and I wot not what.

Cecil felt the lines applied to his own policy, and the Queen exclaimed to Lambarde, "Know ye not I am Richard II.? The conspiracy, however, failed, Essex himself was beheaded, and in the year 1600 Southampton was sent to the Tower. The Earls of Rutland, Monteagle; Sirs H. Davies, C. Danvers, C. Blount; Robert Catesby and William Green, both Warwickshire men; John Arden, the Poet's connection; John Wheeler, John Shakspeare's friend and fellow recusant, all Catholics, were amongst those involved in the consequences of the conspiracy. The Poet, although his play was condemned, himself escaped. Hayward, instead, was chosen as the victim of the royal vengeance, and was imprisoned and racked. But here again, as in the Lucy whippings and imprisonment, so now in the Essex conspiracy, we find the Poet connected apparently with the Catholic Party."

This extract is given to show what intense interest may be imported into a true life of the Poet, if only the absurd views of agnostics and Nonconformists can be set aside. Amongst the minor persons involved in the so-called plot were Catesby, the two Bates', Jo Grant, of Norbrook, by Stratford, and Thomas Winter,

Grant's brother-in-law. Whether Shakspeare was guilty or not is a small matter. A few turns of the thumbscrew by direction, and probably in the presence of Cecil, might produce evidence from some poor agonised wretch, who only hoped to escape more pain by his so-called "confession," or rather lie, which he invented to please Cecil and his torturers. Shakspeare was so beloved by the populace that, with all his daring, Cecil was afraid to do more than banish him, and Shakspeare was no doubt so conscious of the indiscretion of his friends, and the dangers of Cecil's thumbscrew, that he acquiesced in his banishment, and so lost the ten best years of his life. Shakspeare's popularity, his handsome person, his brilliant talents were each of them sufficient to set the dull and stubborn and ugly Cecils against him—poor Lord Bacon was destroyed by them solely because of his superior presence and abilities.

It is admitted by all candid people that the facts brought to light by the author's work must necessarily revolutionise the accounts given of the personal history of Shakspeare, unless they can be got rid of, and as this process has failed, they must be met. The effort at present seems to be to deprive the author of credit for his discoveries by incorporating them quietly without any acknowledgment in other books. Mr. Sidney Lee, who, with others, adopted this unworthy method, is now credited by the critics in the "Standard" and elsewhere with having annihilated the former "greatest Shakspeare authority," Mr. Halliwell Phillips; but that result followed from no remarks of Mr. Lee's, but from the author's discoveries, which Mr. Lee most unfairly adopted as his own, and which even Mr. Churton Collins admitted were the plaintiff's. We know the measure of Mr. Lee's learning before he read the author's book, or rather Mrs. Stokes' paraphrase of it in "The Shaksperian," from his article in the "National Biographical Dictionary"—much the greater part of which is apparently borrowed from the youthful effort of the Rev. Mr. Stokes, of Cambridge; but that article convicts Mr. Lee of having full knowledge of the author's work, for though he carefully avoids mention of his name he does refer to the author's letters in the "Times" (London), which were reprinted and republished throughout the English-speaking world.

The author was chiefly anxious to prove that Shakspeare was a

Catholic in order to cleanse his memory from the reproaches that he was answerable for the dunghill, as Voltaire calls it, which encrusts the diamonds of his works. The author took great pains to show that Shakspeare was not responsible for the plays and sonnets published in his name, and the only explanation possible was that there was some cause why he could not obtain the protection of the Courts of Law to stop the piracy of his works, and to prevent the publishers from selling other works for his. There was only one possible cause for this, and the bare mention of it has sent the agnostics of the present day into a terrible fright. Shakspeare could not sue and could not protect his interests because he was a Catholic, and the son of Catholic parents, who had been crippled and partially ruined for adherence to their religion—despised in their day by the pious as recusants. This suggestion made one of the most ignorant of the critics apparently mad—he wrote in the "Morning Leader," "What does it matter if he was a Catholic—a fig for his religion" !!!

These worthy men forget that the idea was broached not to prove that Shakspeare was a pious man. His works and the respect he always shows for the minister of his religion sufficiently prove that; but solely to account for his passive attitude under this terrible evil, Mr. Sidney Lee writes (page 90) "Shakspeare made no effort to publish any of his works, and uncomplainingly submitted to the wholesale piracies of his plays and the ascription to him of books by other hands. Such practices were encouraged by his passive indifference and the condition of the law of copyright. He cannot be credited with any responsibility for the publication of Thorpe's collection of his sonnets in 1609." Mr. Lee knows that this was untrue in the case of the "Passionate Pilgrim" (see page 183 of his book), and in April, 1600, on an attempt to publish some of his plays, a prohibition against the publication was entered by the Players' Company, and it was successful in the case of "Much Ado" and "As You Like It." Mr. Lee records this himself at page 207, but he allows his previous mis-statement to sully its pages, because presumably he felt that if he corrected it he must give up the argument that Shakspeare was not a Catholic—to such poor shifts are dishonest writers driven. The only portion of this which is worth noticing is the fact that the Poet could not be credited—the

word should have been "debited"—with the publication of the sonnets. That Shakspeare was passively indifferent and did not complain is another of Mr. Lee's unwarrantable assumptions. How does he know it? Has he any proof of it? It is like his invention of the instructions given to Francis Collyns to draw the Will—it is against all probabilities of fact. That Shakspeare did not complain is one thing; that he did not issue writs is quite another. As a Catholic, unless he abjured his faith he could not sue any pirate or even stop his piracy, and therefore his complaints were futile.

Mr. Lee's ideas of the contemporary Copyright Laws are as unsound as his notions of ecclesiastical law affecting marriage. There was no difficulty in the law. The common law protected literary work just as did the Copyright Act, which was merely declaratory of it. A writer in "The Shaksperian" has "corrected" the author's law by pointing out that there were no Copyright Acts till a century afterwards. But Mr. Lee is equally at fault; he has no right to blame the Poet for these piracies. It was the infamous penal laws which Cecil put in force in his 20 years of resolute government which prevented a Catholic from obtaining protection, and left him at the mercy of every scoundrel who was base enough to profit by them.

It is something if the author's work, by calling attention to this question of piracies, has thus released the memory of the Poet, and Mr. Lee now fully allows it, though at the time he wrote his article in the "National Biographical Dictionary" he had no idea of it. Those foolish people who have been giving lavish sums for Shaksperian plays, thinking they were his, will now discover that they have wasted their guineas over worthless piracies, full of errors and gags, because they were stolen from players' copies, which contained the encrustation of filth for which the Poet is in no way responsible; the players themselves added it, finding that it tickled the palates of the more depraved frequenters of the theatres—the agnostics, who must not in this instance be confounded with the Puritans, who abhorred plays. What would John Bunyan have thought had he foreseen that the Solons of the present day had staged his plays as better than Shakspeare's? But unfortunately Mr. Lee, whilst he has mastered the truth, does not see its full application, and he still publishes rubbish about the sonnets, many of

which Shakspeare did not write, as if in fact he was responsible for them all, whereas in all probability he only wrote about the same proportion as he wrote of the "Passionate Pilgrim." Probably Mr. Lee wrote the chapter before he learned that Shakspeare was a Catholic, and could not bring himself to cut it out as he should have done. It is something to see that Mr. Lee is wholly at variance with Messrs. Dowden, Tyler, and Wyndham, who seriously—such is the folly and madness of the Shakspeare authorities—attempt to make the Poet responsible for the whole of them, and most foolishly endeavour to explain the meaning, and wickedly to apply it to particular persons. It is amusing to see into what blunders these enthusiasts fall. Mr. Tyler thought he had run to earth the dark lady, and most indecently published her name and family, though some of the present descendants and relations are living, but, dear me, they do not feel shame in it. One of the family—a lady of Title—not satisfied with the indecencies of the sonnets, actually published details about the dark lady's life, which prove her to be even more licentious and disreputable. This titled lady is properly punished by Mr. Lee proving (in his "Lights") that Shakspeare could have had no intercourse with her. This is probably one of Mr. Lee's usual inaccuracies, or inventions, but it is gratifying if it punishes the unworthy conduct of this "lady."

The object of "The Gentle Shakspeare" was mainly to vindicate the Poet's character from the reproach which so many writers, and especially in these days, have fastened upon it by insisting that he is answerable for what Mr. Furnivall calls "the amusing splashes in filth" which simply defile his work and his memory. Mr. Furnivall, after reading this book, for he has done so it is clear from his attempting very feebly to answer the genealogical argument which it contains, still returns to wallow in the old filth, verifying the terrible words of Scripture, "He that is filthy shall be filthy still," and he has actually thought it becoming to dedicate the amusing splashes to the memory of Prince Leopold, and this in the lifetime of our great and pure-minded Queen—in a collection of Shakspeare's works which includes the filthy scenes of the "mouldy tale" of Pericles, which were not even in it when Shakspeare produced it, for the most shameful brothel scenes with all the hideous

and loathsome details were introduced into it from a different drama called "Marina," the work of a licentious Elizabethan poet. The story of Pericles, which was the work of Gower, a Welsh poet, was mouldy enough to please the most depraved appetites; but it was not simply "beastly," as are the details of the play adapted by Mr. Furnivall, and the filthy splashes (which he thinks so amusing that he cannot part with them) it is now admitted are not the work of the great Poet. It is wonderful to conceive how these critics as they call themselves can find any pleasure in placing such filth before our innocent children, even if Shakspeare wrote it, but that is simply an impossibility. Imagine Shakspeare writing up a scene, the interest of which culminated in the rape of a virtuous girl openly upon the stage, not so much for lust's sake, but because she would not submit her body to the brutes who frequented the brothel into which she had been sold; but preached to them and converted them from the evil of their ways.

The details of this scene are too horrible and indecent to be produced, but it is absolutely necessary to refer to them to show what Mr. Furnivall protects as "amusing." This is the most decent part of the dialogue between the maid and the man when he was preparing to ravish her. Thus she spoke:

"Thou hold'st a place for which the pained'st fiend  
Of Hell would not in reputation change:  
Thou art the damned door-keeper to every  
Coistrel that comes enquiring for his Tib;  
To the choleric fisting of every rogue  
Thy ear is liable; thy food is such  
As has been belched on by infected lungs."

What would the pained'st fiend in Hell think of such language? The man on earth was rather taken aback by this elegant extract, and asks what else he must do for a living? and the virgin suggests that he should "clean out privies," "or common shores of filth"; and then she winds up with this beautiful and convincing peroration, and it did convince him, apparently, for the rape was not consummated:

"If that thy master would gain by me,  
Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance,  
With other virtues, which I'll keep from boast;  
And I will undertake all these to teach."

It is enough. The wretched bully feebly asks :

" But can you teach all this you speak of ? "

She replies triumphantly, and so like a pure maiden :

" Prove that I cannot, take me home again,  
And prostitute me to the basest groom  
That doth frequent your house."

One would ask these gentle critics, is it not shameful to impute such stuff to a poet and a gentleman, to say nothing of polluting the children of our time ; but, alas, the Poet was no gentleman, at least, that is the opinion of one of the so-called greatest critics of the age. Mr. Bernard Shaw has thus written in the " Saturday Review " of the noble Shakspeare, and if Mr. Furnivall is right in foisting " Marina " upon him his invective is not too severe.

He tells us that we have got far beyond Shakspeare as a man of ideas, for " he understood nothing, believed in nothing, but all that you miss in Shakspeare you find in Bunyan." " Shakspeare is alike inferior in energy and elevation of spirit ; his writings are dramatically right in feeling, but silly and resourceless in thought and expression ; whereas Bunyan's work, apart from its superior grandeur, force, and appropriateness, is better claptrap and infinitely better word-music. Against such a man what chance had our poor immortal William with his little Latin ? Would it had been less like his Green, his heathen mythology, his Plutarch, his Boccacio, his circle of London literary wits soddening their minds with books and their nerves with alcohol, quite like us, and all the rest of his Strand and Fleet Street surroundings, activities and interests, social and professional, mentionable and unmentionable. Let us applaud him in due measure in that he came out of it no blackguardly bohemian (just like us ?) but a thoroughly respectable snob."

This stuff is given to show that there are counterparts of the author of " Marina " in our day, who are the great detractors of Shakspeare and the worshippers of John Bunyan. If anyone would care to sodden his mind with more of it, he can do so by recourse to the pages of the review itself—in which he may possibly find even more than he can stomach.

The "Era," on the 23rd September last, in a kind of review of Father Bowden's work, "The Religion of Shakspeare," which practically endorsed the author's views, admitted that the reasoning of Father Bowden's book was conclusive in favour of the view that the Poet was a Catholic, and that the point may now be considered to be settled, for none of the reviewers have anything to say against this view. This is both curious and important, for it marks a distinct advance in favour of the truth, and it secures a firm standpoint which is practically conceded by the reviewers, since it is not now seriously contested. The "Times," the "Saturday Review," the "Athenæum," the "Academy," et omne hoc genus, confess their inability to criticise the work, or in fact to give an opinion upon it, for they do not show a single feather with which to fly, except perhaps the white feather, for they quail before the "scholarly" acquirements of the joint authors, and dare not oppose their own learning against it. The malice and insult, the meanness and mendacity which characterised the attacks of some of them upon the author personally, are never once brought forward in aid of their defeated cause; indeed, the "Saturday Review," in an article which is so flabby and unctuous that it might have emanated from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Chadband, admits "that the theology and ethics of Shakspeare deserve the most careful study," and that "they have been too frequently either neglected or misinterpreted"; but they calmly assert "that the whole political philosophy of the historical plays is totally opposed to the dearest interests of the polity of Rome—they are purely Protestant," though what historical truth has to do with religion it is hard to see, and the following delicious inconsequence exhibits the mind of the writer in all its confusion: "On the accession of Elizabeth it was the duty of every loyal citizen to uphold the Protestant religion; it became with the throne one of the two pillars on which the fabric of the State rested." Would it not be truer to state that it was impossible to support Henry the Eighth's daughter—even at that age as infamous and wanton as her murdered mother—without stamping upon every principle of religion and honour? Possibly the proofs of Elizabeth's personal impurity lately produced by Lord Salisbury ("Hatfield Records") were not generally known, but they were taken before too large a number of Privy Councillors

for it to be possible to be unknown to those who ruled the State. The Protestant party in England foisted her upon the Throne to the exclusion of the rightful heir, in order to destroy the Catholic religion and prevent the possibility of the restoration of Church plunder, then in the hands of renegade Catholics. It is marvellous that a descendant of one of the most voracious of these men—who still possesses the Church property—should have permitted this damning evidence to see the light, but great is truth and it will prevail. The writer of the "Saturday Review" article exposes his crass ignorance of history by stating "that till the Reformation there had been practically no schism and no difficulty—the State religion was the religion of the Church of Rome," a statement the first part of which is utterly untrue, and the last is one which Mr. Gladstone wholly disapproved of, and which the Anglicans practically disavow. It is pleasing after this to read the fair admission that "Shakspeare always referred to religion with peculiar tenderness and solemnity, whilst the ethics of his later dramas, particularly 'Cymbeline' and 'The Tempest,' are penetrated with Christian influence." This is very true, but it was not with the gospel according to Mr. Stiggins. As Father Bowden has most clearly shown, Shakspeare's mind was utterly opposed to Nonconformity and dissent in every particular.

The "Academy" very weakly admits the force of the facts collected by Father Bowden, especially upon the absence in the works of the Poet of any attack upon Catholicism—as if any Protestant of that date could refrain from it—and the fact that in recasting "King John" he struck out anti-Catholic scurrilities, which are only pleasing to Protestants of the Kensit type—who revel in such filth—but what of that? It only shows, writes the "Academy," that the Poet was a fine artist and a gentleman. Does it show nothing more? At all events this is a slap in the face for the "Saturday Review," which regards Shakspeare as a respectable snob, and as a man who believed in nothing.

The "Times" is guilty of a very curious mistake in referring to the condition of the monasteries before the Reformation—as if that were pertinent. It writes, "The Reports of the King's Commissioners were destroyed." Evidently that sagacious critic has

never heard of Father Gasquet's great work. The "Saturday" triumphantly refutes Father Bowden's evidence that John Shakspeare was a recusant by alleging that it is in that very list expressly "stated that he had absented himself from church simply from fear of process for debt." Doubtless that was the excuse offered to a Catholic Town Clerk, who knew the value of it; but it is shown quite clearly that John Shakspeare had ample landed property to satisfy all creditors, and that his land and not his person would be first seized, so that the excuse was a mere pretence. Ah, then they said, "if there was a recusant it must have been another John Shakspeare." How paltry, when the facts relating to his declining office in the Town Council owing solely to his Catholic principles actually synchronise with it; besides, the probability is, from his ignorance and low position, that John the shoemaker was a Puritan, and the same may be said of the other John Shaksperes of the district and period. After all, poor old "Punch" has the only bit of honest criticism. After admitting the value of Father Bowden's work, fairly, the writer adds: "Shakspeare probably kept his convictions to himself, and said nothing to nobody, which is rather the way of people in the present day who are actors first and dramatists afterwards. It may not be a very heroic way, but it is not everyone who has a taste for martyrdom." Yet one of the wiseacres who could never have seen Queen Elizabeth's statutes in the first year of her reign had the audacity to state "that there was no persecution during the first ten years of her reign," when her whole period was a reign of terror, and especially the earliest portion of it was a long trail of bloody massacres.

The "Saturday Review" meanly borrows "Punch's" idea, which it does not perceive is an absolute surrender, and maliciously—more suo—adds, "If Shakspeare was a Catholic when he wrote 'King John'—the ignoramus does not know that it was only an adaptation—"and King Henry VIII" (of which play Mr. Furnivall denies that he wrote a single line) "he was a Catholic of whom his co-religionists have very little reason to be proud, for moral cowardice and treachery to a creed could hardly go any further." This is an infamous libel; it is the revenge of a mean spirit, which, finding it cannot retain the Poet as a dissenter or an agnostic, abuses him, so that the religion which claims him shall

only have him defiled—throwing its revilings over the Poet because it cannot any longer contest the truth, and must give him up to the Papists as one of themselves. But in what has Shakspeare shown the extremity of cowardice? He showed the prudence of bowing to force he was powerless to withstand; so did the majority of his fellow countrymen. It is a wicked calumny to assert that he ever in any way acted treacherously to his faith. Let the writer in the "Saturday Review" produce one piece of evidence to support him if he can, or let him rest satisfied with being convicted of a calumny which renders him unworthy to associate even with the wretched critics of the day. Because he cannot claim the Poet as a convert to his own mock religion, he would represent him as an utterly contemptible character, although his position was shared by many worthy and noble souls, cowed it may be into inactivity because they saw the hopelessness of attempting to oppose Lord Burghley's twenty years of resolute government. But Father Bowden's work is suggestive of something very different from cowardice or even of indifference. He has given pregnant facts which have opened up a new light into Shakspeare's conduct; they require more thought and should be worked out more fully. There is very little doubt that the Poet was involved in the real plots to upset the government, which Burleigh cleverly by anticipation extinguished, and this no doubt explains what has never before been suggested, that the Poet was banished from London and compelled to vegetate in the country. It is very sad, of course, that Shakspeare failed in the duty of a loyal citizen to uphold the Protestant religion and the profligate woman who supported it; but it seems highly probable that our Poet was too active in his support against it, and that it was only owing to the gentleness of his character, which was universally beloved, that Burghley wisely spared him, and only separated him from the rest of the enemies of the throne. If for nothing more than drawing attention to this fact, Father Bowden's work is a notable success, a step in advance of all previous writers, and one worthy of being more fully worked out. It is to be hoped that he will do so in a further edition.

It may be fairly claimed now that the position that Shakspeare was a Catholic is fairly won. The ill-natured remarks of the reviewers

in making the surrender may be disregarded, for they will not be persisted in, since they run counter to the public sentiment. It is one thing to state that Shakspeare was not a Catholic; it is quite another to prove that he was a contemptible person. The "Era," in the recent article on the subject, admits the probability of the truth of the author's contention; but in making this surrender, unfairly asserts that it makes out the Poet to have been a "revengeful lunatic." This is almost worse than the "Saturday Review," and it is a most unfair suggestion, for at the worst the author's contention was that the Will does not represent the Poet's mind; but that he acted so strangely because the state of his health prevented him from exercising his true intentions; he doubtless loved his erring child as purely as he had always loved her, but he determined—and who shall blame him—to punish the worthless fellow who had betrayed her.

Thus much on the present state of the question of Shakspeare's religion, a happy consummation which, if partly due to the author's efforts, is very mainly owing to Father Bowden's edition of Mr. Simpson's work.

The Press at the present day is terribly corrupt. Recent legal trials have proved this too surely, and it is perfectly well known that favourable notices in almost any paper are merely a matter of the payment of a small "honorarium." One has only to read reviews of the most wretched books to be quite sure of this, but it is not generally known that abuse can be purchased as easily. Of course some papers make it a practice to abuse everyone. No one would buy those papers if they did not.

There is ample room for a new "Dunciad," though not on the lines of Alexander Pope's, for though no doubt effective in his day, it has had a disastrous result in our own. Pope destroyed his enemies by descending to their methods and adopting their ways, and the result in our day is that many writers use Pope's "Dunciad" as a storehouse of filth for their their own purposes. Their ways may fairly be summarised as drivel and dirt. Very recently a writer in the "Saturday" actually revived the stale slanders which nearly drove Pope mad, and which produced the "Dunciad"—chuckling over the indecencies and giving the names of the slandered ladies as if the

matter was quite recent, and of present interest to its prurient readers.

Mr. Southwell, of Ivy Lane, Paternoster Row, has recently published a small but amusing pamphlet by Junius Secundus, which is an effort in this direction. It was put into the author's hands during the hearing of the case. It clearly describes the modern critic :

" A man by nature formed but to offend,  
To sneer at things he may not comprehend ;  
Soured and made rabid by his non-success,  
Sunk to a Grub-street scribbler for the Press ;  
Jealous of others, forced for bread to write,  
He grasps his weapons—envy, hate and spite ;  
And in some Rag whose work is to defame,  
That seeks by libel to secure a name—  
Safe in his nameless nothingness he hides,  
And toad-like spits his poison on all sides.  
He writes small essays that are ne'er brought out ;  
Or if they are they're never read at all."

If men of this class were compelled to publish their absurd names to their reviews no one would care a farthing about them. Mr. Churton Collins has taken the sting out of his article by acknowledging the authorship. The majority of the critics hostile to this book have fastened upon the statement in the preface that the author wrote it in three weeks, and Lord Russell seemed to think that because the author had "evolved" it in so short a time, the critics were entitled to abuse the author himself ; but the learned Judge ought to have known (if the critics are ignorant) that there are two kinds of books, books of the hour, as Ruskin calls them, and books for all time ; and it was an exaggeration to write that it contained 317 pages, for, as the acute critic of the "Pall Mall" found out, 67 pages were extracted from Shakspeare, and many pages were from Court Rolls and other documents which had cost much time and labour to collect.

The author wisely or unwisely confessed the fact because he could not pretend that this was a work for all time, nor was he desirous to pose as an authority on Shakspeare—a designation which Dr. Furnivall states (and he ought to know) is generally applicable to fools. This must be the author's reply to a particularly foolish

question by a very ignorant reviewer in the "Morning Post," who wound up a feeble review by stating "that a grave objection of a special kind remains for final notice, and that is the omission of dates from the title page and preface." Would it comfort this poor man to learn that the author added both? but why his publisher struck them out he does not know.

The "Weekly Register," a paper of course in full sympathy with the author's Catholic views, in a leading article on the 18th of February, 1899, although the writer was doubtless unaware of the true motives of the plaintiff's action and of the conduct of Lord Russell of Killowen, thus generously refers to the case, after admitting "that contemporary rolls and records rather than his own works" betray the secret of the true religion of Shakspeare, and this the author "has had the good inspiration to know," thus concludes: The verdict did "not mean that the jury agreed with one word said by the ("Saturday") reviewer of the books of Mr. Yeatman, who won in the unaided conduct of his case the admiration of most of the onlookers for his pluck and for the obvious sincerity of feeling he had brought to bear on the subjects of which he wrote and spoke." What would he have written had he known what was passing in the minds of the actors in this small drama? Besides the action against the "Saturday Review," the author had some legal skirmishes with three papers, the "Athenæum," the "Literary World," and the "Pall Mall Gazette," with varying success. He tackled the "Athenæum" first, and he had to hold a pistol at the head of the barrister who edited it, in order to compel him to act with fairness. He would not accept the author's protest. Three times he returned his letter, with some editorial excuse, and three times it was sent back—strengthened considerably each visit, and as the author utterly detested actions—for he rarely obtains even a semblance of Justice—he was most thankful that at last the Editor inserted it. It was in these words:

*Review, August 8, 1896.—Letter, August 29, 1896.*

"If anyone writes a book to expose the ignorance of the so-called critics of the day, he must expect to be roughly handled by them, and even to meet with calumny, misrepresentation, and abuse; but respectable papers like your own draw the line at libel, and es-

pecially at malicious libel; but your reviewer, not content with charging me with every literary shortcoming and crime, actually invents, at an utter sacrifice of truth, many serious charges of inaccuracy in order to wind up with the elegantly written epitaph, 'Similar inexactitudes occur so often that the value of the facts he has brought forward is utterly depreciated, and he has committed literary suicide.' Your critic's inexactitudes, in fact, cover every charge in a lengthy review, except one error, in which I have written 'Queen Mary' instead of 'Catherine.' He asserts that I have stated that Thomas Shakspeare, of Coventry, is the first recorded notice of the name (I said it was the first found in Warwickshire), and this, he writes, is inaccurate, because I evidently know nothing of Mr. Stephenson's 'Nottingham Records,' and then he drags in the names in that inaccurate and untrustworthy book. In the first place it is not Mr. Stephenson's book. The Very Rev. Canon Raine has been held up as responsible for the accuracy of the transcripts, and I suppose they are true; but Mr. Stephenson has blundered throughout in the index and glossary for which he is responsible. The reference to John Shakspeare, 1360, in the index is wrong, a slight thing; but the glossary contains a terrible 'howler' with reference to the subject matter of the suit. A George Shakspeare was suing for a rosary gaudyett with silver. Mr. Stephenson rejects Mr. Riley's derivation from gaudete and then (in fact ignorantly adopting it) writes that it refers to the five joyful mysteries. This is not a criticism worthy of the 'Athenæum.' Your reviewer's knowledge of mechanics equals his scholarship, for he writes that I am guilty of hanging the heaviest weight of my argument on the weakest links of the chain. If you will permit me to shake off the heaviest calumnies from his chain there will not be left much of his argument. He complains that I have not dated the amusing and pretentious article which appeared in your columns upon Shakspeare's 'Henry VIII.,' which, he writes, is not to be found by ordinary methods of search. If he had adopted the extraordinary method of looking into your indices he might have found it January 9, 1892. This is an equally unfortunate allusion as that to Mr. Stephenson's comical blunders, for there can be no doubt to what I referred. The main argument of my book is directed to dispose of that wretched article which you have,

most improperly, I think, given in your columns, for the ignorant writer upholds the filthy Pericles which, most certainly, Shakspeare never wrote, and he rejects utterly every line of 'Henry VIII.' This is an issue a little more important than the fact that I wrote 'Mary' for 'Catherine,' or that I committed literary suicide—what does the public care about myself? But it is a very important issue whether the ignorance of critics shall enable and almost compel the publishers to pollute the minds of readers and defile the memory of Shakspeare by such filthy abominations.

"You have assisted this frightful evil, and you ought to protect anyone who tries to stem it. Your critic, in a most ungentlemanly fashion (unnecessarily dragging in the name of a lady), charges me with using the name of the Assistant Keeper of the Public Records, Mr. Douglas Trimmer, to vouch for the authenticity and exactitude of my transcripts. This very serious charge is utterly false and libellous. I have done nothing of the sort. I only made Mr. Trimmer responsible for his transcripts (not mine), because I differ from him in several points."

The Editor writes: "Mr. Yeatman's letter needs no answer," but Dr. Furnivall, who is doubtless responsible for the review, as well as for the article of 1892, attempts to answer it in the preface to "The Royal Shakspeare." Let the public judge who has now committed literary suicide!

The paragraph at the end is amusing. The editor is as spiteful as a woman; but the author could not complain of it, for he only told him that "he would not tolerate any editorial comments," and it cannot be averred that he made any. He takes his licking in silence.

Curiously, after the severe criticism that the author had not dated the foolish letter he referred to, which had appeared in the editor's own columns, this letter is not to be found in the annual index, but it appears in August 29, 1896.

The author was also grossly and most unfairly libelled in the "Literary World," and by similar legal threats he compelled the editor of that paper to insert the following castigation, which he must have felt to be as derogatory to his own dignity as the poor editor of the "Athenæum" had felt, and proved that he felt, in his own case.

"THE GENTLE SHAKSPERE."

"SIR,—Allow me to correct some of the most glaring misstatements in the review which appeared in your issue of the 4th inst. Most of them have been published already in quite a number of papers and partially corrected; but they are repeated so persistently that I cannot doubt but that they emanate from the same 'authorities on Shakspeare' whose conduct I have impugned, and whose opinions your critic vouches. They are, I hope, hurt by my book; but as they do not care openly to complain of my strictures, they are bound to be very careful not to misstate my views, anonymously.

"It is most unjust to assert that I have applied the disgusting terms of 'grovelling detractor' and 'grubber' to Mr. Donnelly, or to anyone undeserving of them; I have deliberately (because I hope good may come of it) applied these terms to men of high literary character and position in our own Universities, and who pose as great Shaksperian scholars, and I have done this because they have ignorantly or wilfully (I care not which) defiled the memory of the poet by attributing to him poems and plays which he never wrote—for instance, the filthy 'Pericles.' These same great writers have attempted to rob the poet of his greatest work, 'King Henry VIII.'; these are the issues I have raised in my book which your reviewer does not seem to care to meet, and he therefore draws a red herring across the scent to attempt to hide these terrible charges by charging me with disgusting and indecent conduct. My charges are serious, for they actually leave these men open to criminal prosecution for keeping these wretched impostures still in circulation. I am told that this very month half a million copies of 'Pericles' have been issued by one publisher.

"It is true that I called Halliwell-Phillips a magnificent pig driver. I did so because he applied the term 'pig' to the poet's mother and her family. That offence, though disgusting enough, is venial compared to the sins of our great university scholars.

"Again has your reviewer misstated (of course unfairly to myself) the dispute between the Rev. H. P. Stokes, of Cambridge, and myself, recorded in the 'Times' and the 'Academy.' If it is worth reviving in your columns, surely it should be stated accurately. Mr. Stokes attempted 'to break my links' by proving

that Richard Shakspeare, of Wroxall, had a wife named Margaret, and not one Alys Griffyn (as I fairly proved by a process of exhaustion). On referring to his 'authorities' I found that he had actually misquoted and misread them, and that he was referring to a Margaret, wife of Richard Shakspeare, of Alcester, a person of no consequence whatever, and in no way connected with Wroxall or Snitterfield, as your reviewer suggests. Instead of at once admitting his error and apologising for his rudeness, Mr. Stokes repeated himself in the 'Times' and the 'Academy,' and put himself so completely out of court that I did not think it necessary to slay him over again in my book; but I will take care to expose the truth fully in my next edition. I see it is dangerous to be generous to Mr. Stokes. I must protest against the conduct of your reviewer in reviewing myself rather than my book. What right has he to refer to my religion? It is quite true that I am a Catholic, and I am not ashamed of it; but why should he hold me up to public scorn on that account. Unfortunately, there is still a terrible amount of bigotry abroad. I protest most strongly, too, against the assertion that I have 'collected all the disgusting slanders about Queen Elizabeth.' What I have done is to collect some of her shameful acts against poor Catholics—a very different matter. I leave the collection of filth to my opponents and to your reviewer.

"Again, your reviewer misstates my arguments against the authenticity of 'King John.' I do not reject it on the ground of Professor Dowdon's silly 'Protestant farrago,' but because its aim was to glorify vice. It is not a Popish question, for if anything the writer sought to glorify the power of Rome. Evidently two minds were at work on this play.

"In conclusion, I beg to remind your reviewer that to abuse an author and misstate his arguments is not to answer his book; and if he has not knowledge and intelligence to do that, he had better not touch it. Your reviewer is evidently very ignorant of mediæval history; his estimate of the value of money is ludicrous, and he has yet to learn the value of the old style in obtaining dates; but should he learn these elemental questions he must forget his cherished Protestantism and write in a more catholic spirit.—Your obedient servant,

"JOHN PYM YEATMAN.

"Lightwoods Cottage, Beech Lanes, near Birmingham."

After the libel action the "Literary World" (24th of February, 1890) wrote in a chastened spirit: The Editor thinks that Lord Russell's decision will doubtless have some weight as a precedent "that when an author writes on a controversial subject he must expect severity" (as if any but an idiot ever thought otherwise), "and that a critic, so long as he was honestly inspired, so long as he kept away from personality, ought to have a very free hand in expressing his own views."

There is no new precedent here, for this is the old law. Lord Russell's mistake was in thinking it new, and in not giving the jury some idea what was personality and scurrility, and what was honest criticism. The old law is very clear on these points, and quite in accord with the remarks of the Editor; but, he adds, "even when a critic was careful to be polite, but was unable to be sympathetic, Mr. Yeatman thought proper to send a threat of an action." Certainly, and if anyone cares to look at the "Literary World" he will be amused to see the Editor's idea of politeness, and see for himself how well advised was that Editor to eat the leek.

The "Westminster Review" (15th February, 1899) very fairly describes Lord Russell's summing up as "emphatically (asserting) that mere severe criticism of a book sent for review, if written and published in good faith, was not actionable, nor was mere bad taste or vulgarity libel," and this is "emphatically" very bad law, and when another Judge, and possibly one with an open mind, may try the case, the poor critic will be badly advised if he runs the risk of punishment. It is not every judge who loves the stygian flavour of the waters of Pope's Fleet Ditch, or who will tolerate it if sprinkled ever so cleverly.

The new editor of the "Academy" (18th of February, 1899), whoever he may be, deserves a niche in any "Dunciad" that may be written, for the vulgarity of his wit and for his pigeon English. This is to be regretted, for the former editor of the "Academy" was a barrister, like the present, but he was a gentleman, and whilst he never indulged in modern slang, did not, like the new editor, borrow his wit from the Holy Scriptures. The editor writes: "The four libels complained of were from the 'very excellently conducted business pen' of Mr. Churton Collins who, 'lo and behold, was no barrister at all'" (sic). Now is it true that he wrote the four

libels, or more than one of them? Will these assassins, like Mr. Churton Collins, face the light? As their editor is not beneath gleaning "the rumours of the jury-room," perhaps he will explain this or clear his friends at the Bar of this foul reproach, and whilst he is about it, would he explain what he means by "a cryptic exclamation" as applied to the works of "Job," "whose books appear to have been badly noticed," from which it seems that the prophet was libelled by critics (the editor's grammar is so faulty and his meaning so obscure that perhaps he does not intend this). But why is Job cryptic? Even some agnostics admit that he had the pen of a ready writer, and was plain enough in his meaning, especially in his denunciation of critics (liars he called them). Of course he was then referring especially to the "notices" of his works, so recently discovered by the new editor of the "Academy."

The "Globe" (16th February, 1899) wrote in a more manly spirit, "Even where a writer is guilty of no extravagancies, but only, as in Mr. Yeatman's case, puts forward views that are not generally accepted, he must expect, and ought not to shrink from, sharp criticism. Let him hit back in print, too, comforting himself the while that it is better for a new theory to be abused than to be unnoticed; and if there is anything in him or his arguments, he will get plenty of support. Now we do not say that the criticisms of which Mr. Yeatman complained were altogether polite or sound. On the question, for instance, of the restoration of the Order of the Coif, the Lord Chief Justice, whom we humbly conceive to be a higher legal authority than the writer in the 'Saturday Review,' agrees with Mr. Yeatman, so that it is hardly just to describe him as a 'crank.'"

The author is, indeed, sincerely grateful to the memory of Mr. F. O. Crump, Q.C., late editor of the "Law Times," who for something like 40 years treated the author and his books with absolute fairness, and he knew well the secret history of this case, and how the author has been maltreated alike by some members of the Bench and Bar. The "Law Times" has, on the 18th of February, 1899, the following observation: "Mr. Yeatman's action for libel against the 'Saturday Review' terminated in a verdict for the defendants, which might (perhaps with more justice) have

been a verdict for the plaintiff. We regret that such criticism as that to which Mr. Yeatman was subjected can be held to be fair comment."

The author is grateful to the late editor of the "Law Times" for this temperate and decisive comment, and for the very handsome admission that the verdict might, with more justice, have been for the plaintiff, and especially for the expression of regret that the treatment he had received from the "Saturday Review" could be regarded as "fair comment." The author could and does desire no more, and it entirely effaces in his mind a somewhat surprising and painful feeling aroused by the howling of the ribald and venal portion of the Press. But the author's feelings and views are not of the slightest concern to the public, and deserve to have no more regard paid to them than is the right of the humblest of His Majesty's subjects. But as, in fact, he fought this case on principle, in order, for the sake of others, to call attention to some grave abuses affecting his own profession, and to put a stop to the frightful evils of such a paper as the "Saturday Review," he would now be halting half way, and be wanting in the attribute of thoroughness, were he not to call attention to the effect of Lord Russell's ruling.

The regret expressed by the "Law Times" that such frightful abuse of the liberty of the Press could be regarded as fair comment, can only have this meaning—that the older and safer ways of the law are preferable to the modern methods of the late Chief Justice, and it is regrettable indeed that they should be summarily brushed away—for something not in itself admirable—for this is the effect of Lord Russell's decision, and it constitutes a real danger to the community that henceforth it is useless to appeal to the wiser and more prudent decisions which our judges have built up by a long train of decisions, and by earnest thought, at a vast expenditure of judicial time and care, and at enormous cost to the suitors, for old time wisdom and consideration is not to be considered; but that in the future the jury are to be absolutely unfettered in their decision, and are the sole judges, they are to be allowed to declare what is and what is not a libel after listening to all the topics of mere prejudice that vindictive or unblushing counsel may stoop to lay

before them. Lord Russell was utterly wrong in that he did not condescend to advise the jury what they ought to consider libellous, and how to differentiate it from what was simply vulgar and indecent, but he contented himself with depriving them of all guides, and by leaving the question of libel wholly and solely to them, and by brushing away what he considered to be the cobwebs of antiquity—the mere technicalities of the law—he cleared the ground of all fences and restraints, and left an unlimited and open field before them, and not unnaturally they strayed into the wilderness in search of thistles.

The "Law Times" evidently regrets this new mode of administering law, but the "Saturday Review" fully approves of it. There is an instructive article in that paper of the 1st of May, 1896, upon the Jameson trial, in which the points are fairly raised, and the course of the Lord Chief Justice in that case fully approved of. Lord Russell in that case imperiously swept aside the technical objections—as he called them, but, in fact, the safeguard of wiser judges—which were but feebly raised by counsel—at the same time that he literally swept away the counsel before him. Certainly the editor of the "Saturday" said that the conduct of the judge was "brutally vindictive," that the sentences were an "outrage upon public opinion," on account of their "preposterous severity," yet he declared that the summing up was "a masterly as well as a masterful performance," and although "it had been described in certain quarters as a passionate speech for the Crown, yet it was quite right, because under a less strong direction the jury would have disagreed," and that would have been, thought the editor, "a deplorable result."

As a matter of fact the jury did disagree, with the masterly tactics of the Lord Chief Justice, for they practically returned a verdict of acquittal—as any English jury would and should do, for a verdict of condemnation is an outrage upon the conscience of the country, and Lord Russell only obtained this verdict by sweeping aside the scruples of the jury, and terrifying them as he flustered counsel, the weak counsel who was afraid to oppose his Lordship. If Sir Edward Clarke had had the manhood to stand up at the critical moment, and to oppose the violence of the judge by the firmness of the Bar, England would have been

spared from the indelible disgrace of convicting as criminals a body of noble and devoted men who were only actuated in their conduct by a sincere desire to do their duty, at all costs and all hazards, just like other noble Englishmen who have helped to build up this mighty Empire, and who happily have been treated differently. The chief infamy of this trial, and it was an infamous trial throughout, was that the Government were prosecuting their own servants and officers for obeying the commands of their superiors. The convicted men acted directly under the orders of their Government, who were directly in sympathy and in contact with our own. If any were to be prosecuted, surely, in common decency, the authorities should have prosecuted Cecil Rhodes. But they could not do that without involving the Home Government itself. Of course, that astute individual would at once show his correspondence with Mr. Chamberlain, which, if it did not exonerate him, would indicate that the Colonial Secretary was equally criminal with himself. Nor can it be said that Cecil Rhodes discreetly kept in the background, and could not be punished; he came impudently to the front and flouted the English people to their faces, whilst he showed his contempt for Mr. Chamberlain by his braggadocio and insolence. This seems a tremendous argument to adduce in illustration of the present very minor consideration of what is and what is not a libel, but it is directly in point and most valuable to show the extreme importance of the plaintiff's contention, that the Order of Serjeants should be revived. No judge would have dared to treat a Serjeant as Lord Russell treated Sir Edward Clarke. When he got up, as he had a perfect right to do, and as it was his duty to claim the verdict for his clients, Lord Russell pounded his desk furiously, and refused to allow him to speak, what should Clarke have done? It is difficult to say. Certainly, first of all, he ought to have pounded on his little desk back again, and if the Lord Chief Justice then threw an inkpot at his head, Clarke might perhaps have done the same, for in a court of law, upon a trial, the Serjeant was the equal of the Judge, and the Judge was compelled to admit his equality by addressing him as his brother. It may seem ridiculous to claim such an equality; but now that the Order has been violently stran-

gled by the Lord Chancellor, every little barrister has in fact the status of a Serjeant, and could and should oppose the violence of the Bench, in just the same manner as a Serjeant would have done in bygone times. Lord Russell is a late convert to the idea of the revival of this Order, curiously so was Oliver Cromwell after he had dethroned the king and killed him, though he no doubt would have brushed away the law and the counsel as contemptuously as Lord Russell has done, if they had dared to oppose him when he aimed at the murder of King Charles the First.

It is difficult to meet Lord Russell's arguments and methods, they are so brutally simple; but they must be met and disposed of, or a reign of terror will have been inaugurated, if it has not yet commenced. It is absurd to say (as Lord Russell did) that there was no connection with the author's views and the matter in hand, and that they were wantonly intruded. They form the very base of the argument, and go to the root of the matter. If the author was wrong it was open to the reviewer to correct him, to show him where he was in error; but to heap vulgar and disgusting epithets upon him (which no gentleman could quietly submit to) without attempting to apply them to his arguments or statements, is not criticism, it is abuse, and it is therefore libellous. The jury ought to have been told this, and to have been called upon to say whether this criticism was or was not a libel. Mr. Andrew Lang has commented upon this trial in the pages of "Longmans," and he has given some very bad as well as some good advice to young reviewers, which may lead them into trouble if they attempt to follow it too literally. He writes: "If you honestly think that an author is 'a canting, fatuous, ignorant, bemuddled, dogmatic writer, guilty of unctuous sectarianism,' you may say so boldly, but you may also reflect whether it is worth while to say anything at all, and you may ask yourselves whether such phrases are consistent with critical urbanity—even if they are not libellous, the jury was not asked to decide that question. For my part I think that the critic whose graceful style has these floral components might manage to express his unfavourable opinion of a book . . . without resorting to such archaic methods. One may be very annoying (if that is the object) and very explicit without ceasing to be urbane."

The "Literary World" (7th of April), commenting upon Mr. Lang's methods, thinks that Mr. Lang is quite right, but that editor and Mr. Lang are both wrong. They probably never heard of an old maxim of our law, *Ignorantia juris quod quisque scire tenetur neminem excusat*; if the bold Bohemian indulges in his copious vocabulary when he happens to be wrong in his law or in his views, he will not be excused, and he will be held guilty of libel; and let him take very good care before which judge he comes. He cannot choose his judge, and it may be he may come before a judge who hates Bohemians and their ways, and instead of meeting with kind indulgence, he may find himself under the lash of a judge who follows the ancient ways, and who abhors all vulgarity and ruffianism. There is now no uniformity in the decisions of our judges, because they have lost the training and guidance given by the Courts in Banco and their authority, which sternly put down any tendency to rowdyism which was occasionally exhibited by younger judges. On one occasion, when a very young judge, in his salad days, had very grossly misconducted himself, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, who was the very personification of judicial dignity, held up his hands in horror. "What," he said, "did Mr. Justice Blank say that?" Baron Bramwell once said to the author in another case when it was counsel's duty to complain of some impropriety: "What, did Mr. Justice Blank say that? I won't believe it; I don't doubt your statement in the least; I have no doubt you are speaking what you believe; but it is impossible." These sort of remarks kept the Justices Blanks of that date in order; but, alas! now that control over the judge is gone, and the judge has no one to call him to account, because he is merely a cypher belonging to his Division, and has no special Court to look after him, this cuts both ways, and young reviewers will do well to bear in mind that they may come before a judge who may leave it to the jury whether the use of foul language was justified. If it was, according to Lord Russell, a critic may behave like a blackguard, and this course will be easier than that which Mr. Lang commends, to annoy without ceasing to be urbane. That is an art which requires both skill and knowledge. The young Bohemian, if he wishes to throw dirt on anyone, had better perhaps go the whole hog. Heap it up as thickly as

possible, and trust to the chance of getting before a Bohemian judge.

It is very difficult to suggest any curtailment of the power of the Press, because it might be an infringement on liberty, but there must surely be a line, as our older judges have laid it down, between liberty and licence, and the jury ought to have been instructed by the judge that it was their duty to say under which head these several libels fell. No doubt the Court was quite accurate in saying that a plaintiff who himself uses strong language has no right to complain of strong language being used to him, and nobody but a fool would so complain; but because a plaintiff has written of Queen Elizabeth that she was a wanton and of Cromwell that he was a vile murderer—terrible accusations, gross if you will—is he liable to have the same or worse epithets applied to himself personally? and if instead of combatting his argument a reviewer covers him with abuse, is that a libel? It is certainly no review of his arguments, and must be libellous. No doubt the use of strong language is very regrettable, but it is the duty of those who are fairly and properly discussing a question of public interest to use it, and perhaps the more brutally frank it is the better. There is nothing new in either of these charges, only it was most appropriate then to insist upon them, because questions of the most vital interest were and are still rife, and will be governed by them. The same objection could be made to the works of Sir Walter Scott, and of scores of authors who have remarked upon it; but nobody would be so foolish as to denounce their works as rubbish, or to abuse them because they had exposed a truth which ought to be known. No doubt one of the most burning questions of the day—if we except the Miners' Eight Hours Bill and Joseph Chamberlain's honest advocacy of Old Age Pensions—is that of the Establishment of the Church of England; and the motives of its founders, their conduct and designs, are of the greatest importance to its elucidation. In writing upon the personal history of the great Poet, this question came prominently forward, because he was a sufferer by these very evils. One could not fairly consider the life of Shakspeare without enquiring into the matters which surrounded him, the evils of his period, the chief of which are glanced at in this book.

It may interest some people to know the truth about the action of Yeatman v. the "Saturday Review," which created considerable interest at the time, and even the foolish reviewers and newspaper folk were much amazed by the decision, which everybody in and out of the Court regarded as a foregone conclusion in the author's favour, as did the defendants themselves, for they offered him £50 and his costs long before the case was entered for trial. The author does not complain of the treatment he then received at the hands of the Press—much of it was fair and manly. Papers of a low range of intelligence, or those viciously prejudiced, were in ecstasies of delight, for had not the author published the truth about their especial Saints, Queen Elizabeth and that "vile murderer" Cromwell, which latter was opportune, for it helped to pitchfork his statue into the Parliamentary ditch (or hole) to which it is now very properly relegated, answering the anxiously demanded enquiry, "Shall Cromwell have a statue?" by a decided negative; and had he not shown something of the horrible truths respecting that still viler woman, Queen Elizabeth, murderess and libertine—as gross as the first Protestant Pope, her father. Lord Salisbury has oddly enough since given an account of her early immorality to the world through the publications of the Historical Commission, showing that the character of this particular occidental star was a little blurred by obscenities. Edward VI. was nurtured as a Protestant, and very early also blossomed into a murderer, for he began as a boy by slaying his uncles; but Queen Elizabeth was at heart a Catholic, and was so nurtured like both of her parents, and so continued during her life, though she aped a Pope, and as Protestant Pope she prohibited the bishops and clergy from bringing their "Queans," "wives and other women" within the sacred precincts of the cathedrals and churches. Had Cecil allowed her she would have insisted upon the celibacy of the clergy. The Records of St. David's, whilst they exposed the time-serving of that arch hypocrite Parker, who, at the Queen's commands, sent her orders, though, as his letters show, his soul abhorred it, they also show that Cecil (who was picking up a few crumbs of Church property in the character of Seneschal of that Bishopric) claimed the credit of preventing her from reinstating this Catholic practice; whilst both Parker and Cecil allowed her to abolish the still more important matter,

and indeed a Church of England doctrine of these days, of praying for the souls of the deceased, the truth of which the good Queen Victoria acknowledged. Cecil had profited so much by filching the property of pious donors that he could not allow her to follow the bent of her mind and to openly declare herself a Catholic, and this is not surprising, besides it was good statecraft, for she had thereby proclaimed herself a bastard, which would be a rather bare-faced admission, to say nothing of the danger that Cecil and his crew would run of having to disgorge Church plunder—at least that portion of it which they had filched from the poor and needy. Perhaps one of the most extraordinary things on record is that it was reserved for our own days, when the Catholic religion has been quietly re-established, so that practically Catholics live under the protection of the law, and can bring or defend actions, though they may not be allowed to win them, and who have no longer the fear before their eyes of being disembowelled, and of having their hearts cut out whilst they are alive, for the crime of practising their religion, as it was done in Shakspeare's days; yet in spite of those privileges it was reserved in these days for a Catholic Lord Chief Justice to declare from the Bench that it was a matter of importance to preserve the character of Queen Elizabeth for virginity, although at the same time he paraded his sympathy with the plaintiff as a Catholic himself, and was not afraid to avow his entire approval of the plaintiff's efforts in favour of the restoration of the ancient courts of Banco, and the revival of the Order of Serjeants—for advocating which the "Saturday Review" had libelled him as a "crank" of the profession. The action was brought for four libels, chiefly of a professional character, but the most salient was the review of the book "The Gentle Shakspeare." The ignorance of the Reviewer is apparent from the review itself. It also contains a notice of H. Snowdon Ward's "Shakspeare's Town and Times," and the Reviewer writes: "A very different book is this. Keeping on the highway of sound knowledge and established fact, it tells in a clear and unaffected style simply and fully the story of Shakspeare's life and career *so far as latest research has ascertained them.*" This is bad criticism and untrue in fact. Mr. Ward's book is singularly defective in essential details, and more

than this, Mr. Ward discovered this fact by reading the author's work, and he most fairly and generously gave him full credit for enlightening him. Seldom has one author paid so handsome a tribute of respect to the writing of another, for Mr. Ward gives a special notice of it in an Appendix "C," which he entitles, "New Light on Shakspeare's Lineage." He could not incorporate it in his own text, for it was printed, he writes, "while our own book is in the printer's hands. A most interesting and probably important volume has been published from the pen of John Pym Yeatman. Though the time before our last pages close for the press is too short to allow us to thoroughly consider Mr. Yeatman's arguments, we feel that to pass his work without notice would be a decided mistake. Certain 'detail blemishes' seem to have led most of the critics to overlook and ignore the enormously important contribution which Mr. Yeatman has made to the History of Shakspeare, provided his statements stand verification, and we cannot doubt they will do so."

Then is set out briefly a long list of the contentions of this book "... which explain many otherwise obscure points," "... why Shakspeare's works were never published by himself," etc. "The connection with the Griffin family gives an ancestry including numberless men of high standing, and the importance of such a discovery can hardly be over-estimated. . . . Of course, before accepting his conclusions as final it will be necessary to examine with the greatest possible care the evidence brought forward."

Mr. Churton Collins astonished everybody by taking upon himself the responsibility for the review in the "Saturday," but, on cross-examination, was compelled to admit that he had not attempted to examine this evidence or to verify it; that he had no knowledge of antiquities himself, nor had he consulted anyone who had; yet he had the audacity to adopt many of the conclusions of this book and parade them in his review as his own, although they directly contradicted Mr. Ward's "sound knowledge and established facts," and which showed them to be worthless, and would render it necessary for Mr. Ward to correct and re-write every page of it for a second edition.

Asked if he had read Mr. Ward's book, which he praised so

highly, he fell into the trap, and said, "Oh dear, yes. I read every word of it. I always do of every book I review."

"Then of course you read Appendix 'C' relating to my book?"

He saw he was caught, and literally turned green. "No, he could not say that he had."

Taken through the chapter in detail he was compelled to admit that he had not considered Mr. Ward's conclusions on this book.

Taken through part of his own review he was asked from whom he got all his information given in his own article relative to the labyrinth of John, Richard, and William Shakspeare. He could not say.

Asked if he learnt it from Halliwell Phillips he admitted that he did not, but that on the contrary that writer confounded them.

Asked again, "Who taught you this?" he answered, angrily, "I learnt it from your book, and I gave you credit for it."

"No," was the answer, "you did not, you paraded it as your own learning. From whom did you get it?"

"I must have taken it from French."

"No, you did not; his very clever book does not contain it. From whom did you get it?"

And he could not answer. Never was a critic more clearly caught, or more fairly hoisted on his own petard.

The real motives for bringing this action cannot be discussed here. The author has already published them in the preface to the 3rd section of his History of Derbyshire, and it is just to the author to state that the following comments were written, and but for unfortunate circumstances, would have been published in Lord Russell's lifetime. Suffice it to say it was not on account of Mr. Churton Collins' portion of the "Saturday Review" articles. That was rather pleasing to the author in one sense, for it gave him a peg on which to hang his action. The author, whilst holding the "Saturday Review" in contempt, was perfectly sincere in his statement that he regarded its ill-natured attacks as probably likely to result in benefit rather than in damage to the author assailed. The Chief Justice made very unfair use of this admission, but it was strictly accurate. The first libel of the "Saturday Review" on the author's books, the "History of

the Common Law" (reprinted in his "Introduction to the Study of Early English History") from the pen of a member of his own circuit immediately produced a number of most complimentary reviews which had never been written but for the venomous articles of the "Saturday." The Chief Justice properly ruled this libel to be out of date; but most unfairly excluded it from the consideration of the jury, although it was only used to illustrate the persistent malice of those writers, of which it was the best proof. The action was brought because if it had been successful it would have been the means of directing public attention to some of the greatest evils to which the public are subjected through the jobbery which is destroying the honour and independence of the Bar, and for venturing to attempt to oppose which the author has had to contend with a mountain of prejudice, of calumny and injustice. This evil culminates, and had been brought about by the destruction of the Order of the Coif, to which it has always been the author's highest ambition to belong. Lord Russell was not one of those, either when on the Bench or at the Bar, of whom the author had reason to complain of calumny and injustice. On the contrary, when Attorney-General, he did not forget that he was entrusted with the patronage of Treasury briefs, not for his friends' or his own private ends, but for the good of the public and the honour of the Bar, and during his tenure of office neither the author nor any other member of the Bar had reason to complain of neglect; but in his conduct of this case the author has much reason to complain, for he went out of his way to give evidence from the Bench, which greatly prejudiced the plaintiff, for he unfairly and indeed untruly asserted, after the plaintiff's mouth was closed, that there was no pretence for the plaintiff's assertion that the destruction of the Order of Serjeants had caused a loss of honour and independence both at the Bar and upon the Bench, although no one knew better than the Chief Justice that the plaintiff had asserted nothing of the kind, but had only argued, as he had a perfect right, that this would be the natural result of the evil; and besides, his strictures were applied to men bred up under the old system long before the Judicature Act, and he knew that members of the Bench and the Bar had sullied even the

Bench itself by a series of libels, some of which had been and were being covertly supported even by members of his own Circuit, the Northern, whilst he was practising upon it; but it is fully admitted, and, indeed, confidently asserted, that Lord Russell not only took no part in them, but wholly disapproved of them, as did every gentleman at the Bar and on the Bench, whether connected with the Circuit or not; but he was fully acquainted with all the facts, though he most improperly pretended to misunderstand the plaintiff's assertion. The Chief Justice took the extraordinary line of agreeing with the plaintiff both as regards the misfortune of suppressing the Serjeants and the revival of the ancient Courts of Banco in order to put down the mild ruffianism of the puisne judges, and even that of the Chief when it occasionally breaks out, although with regard to the first at least he had secretly opposed the author and thrown in his lot with the destroyers of the independence of the Bar: in doing this he had grossly insulted the plaintiff, so that when the case came into his list the plaintiff felt compelled to protest against his trying it, and throughout the plaintiff had the anxiety of fighting the case before a pronounced enemy. These views were expressed immediately upon his appointment, and as Lord Russell was a very fair-minded man, and had himself a very high view of the honour and dignity of the Bench, he may have changed his mind in the interval. He knew as well as the plaintiff what was the real issue at stake, and he was horrified at the idea of the plaintiff's success, which he knew would result in a severe condemnation of some members of the Bench and of his own Circuit, and this may have led him to overstep the true bounds of his office, and to say that which the jury entirely misunderstood and took in a wrong sense; for unquestionably there was much in the plaintiff's case with which he was in cordial agreement, but with all his cleverness Lord Russell was not an adroit speaker, and frequently in his vehemence gave impressions which he never intended to make.

Of course I appealed against Lord Russell's decision. It was not only cruel and unjust, it was opposed to law—it was absurd. I here drop writing in the polite third person, and, as I am now writing about myself, prefer to do so in the first person. There

seems more vigour and point, and certainly there is more directness in doing so; but I was beaten before starting, for there is now no Court of Appeal, and this is the chief point I have been advocating for many years. In destroying the independence of the Bar by strangling the Order of the Coif, the makers of the Judicature Act found it necessary to do two things, very technical perhaps, and but little understood, to abolish the Exchequer Chamber and to take from the Barrister the enormous power of "tendering a bill of exceptions," which was a very summary proceeding in the hands of a bold and learned advocate, and one which the more ignorant of the judges especially dreaded. It raised the matter out of the arena of the offending judge's own court, where he might have had the sympathy, if not the assistance, of his fellows, and arraigned him at once, without delay and expense, before the Court of Exchequer Chamber, which was a Court composed of any two of the three great Common Law Courts, which sat upon the misdeeds of the third. It was a splendidly contrived tribunal, which ought never to have been destroyed, for it compelled each division to look sharply after itself. In those days authority was respected, and counsel had only to cite cases in his favour to ensure a success, and each one of the three courts was at the same time jealous of its own reputation, and careful of the conduct of the others; because the decisions of the Exchequer Chamber would be binding upon them, until overruled by the House of Lords, a tribunal rarely resorted to in those days, because justice could almost always be obtained in either Court of Banco, and, if not, in the Court of Exchequer Chamber; but now we have absolutely no Court of Appeal, though we have a plethora of Appeal Courts. The astute practitioner, if he is base enough, can appeal on every trumpery point, and frequently prevent the case from coming to trial. I was party to a case in which the defendants ran up the costs till they reached £1,000, and that at the writ stage, and the plaintiff was defeated by making him a bankrupt for those very costs; and in another in which I was counsel, the hostile costs were run up to double that sum, and finally choked off the litigation before it actually commenced.

The first appeal under the Judicature Acts lay to the Divisional Court, which consisted of any two judges who had no other job

for the day. That poor Court was emasculated by taking away from it all applications for new trials, and finally all decisions on practice points, so that owing to the expense, there are practically no appeals against the decision of judges at *Nisi Prius* or at Chambers—a crying enormity. But supposing the party gets into the Court of Appeal—not one in a hundred cases can do it, or the Court would be choked with overwork—there is no chance of obtaining a satisfactory decision. There are several extremely able men in these Courts; but they have no power, the direction being practically in the hands of the President. The Chancery Division have had able men as Presidents, but since the time of Lord Justice Bramwell, the Common Law Division has been in the hands of very incompetent chiefs; and yet this chief combines in himself the powers of the three chiefs of the old Common Law Courts, and of the appellate jurisdiction of the Court of Exchequer Chamber; and how is he chosen? Simply by luck. In old days the Lord Chief Baron and the two Lord Chief Justices were coveted appointments, for which men were carefully selected; now, as in all new tribunals, there is no order, and the chief sits by reason of seniority. It is no use blinking the fact, for it is well known and deeply deplored by the Bar; it is a perfect farce to argue a point of law in this Court. The present Master of the Rolls is generally amiability itself; but he will not listen. Moreover, it wearies him to try, and it is heart-breaking to counsel to pile up precedent after precedent, and then to be told by the Judge: “I don’t see that these cases have anything to do with the point.” No attempt at refinement, or discrimination, or analysis; but a simple condemnation of all the authorities in the lump. “Authorities be hanged” is the order of the day. This is not written from any ill feeling towards the Judge; but it is written in the faint hope that the truth may yet prevail, and that our wise legislators may see the wisdom of re-establishing the old Courts of Banco, and restoring something like wisdom to the administration of the law.

As already observed, the real motive of the action was not to sue in respect of this book, but to expose the infamous conduct of a clique of barristers, who, under pretence of writing in the interests of literature, had for years pursued the author with the most cruel calumnies, some actually from the Bench itself, which

resulted in his retirement from his practice on the Midland Circuit and to his devotion to literary pursuits, in which his professional enemies could not leave him in peace. Lord Russell, who was so hard upon the plaintiff, had been—perhaps quite innocently, for these acts are perpetrated under cover of the ballot—a party to them, and yet he pretended to treat this conspiracy as a hallucination, and, dreading the exposure, he insisted upon basing this action upon the libel in respect of this book, quite ignoring the more important professional libels. The author proposes here at least to show that, being driven by the action of an unworthy clique from his Circuit and his means of living, is not a delusion. The great difficulty in these cases is to get at the really guilty parties. The ballot used at Circuit messes protects the assassins, and there is unfortunately no law which compels the writer of a libellous article to give evidence against himself by admitting the authorship. Surely it would be a salutary law, that everyone who takes upon himself to castigate his neighbour in the interests of literature, should give hostages for his honesty by enrolling his name and address, and by signing his article. This would be of no use in some cases, for names would be assumed improperly. I complain that Dr. Odgers, in compelling me to admit to the jury that I was a Catholic, and wrote the book in a Catholic spirit, was guilty of conduct unworthy of a member of the Bar, for it was calculated and in the highest degree intended to prejudice a jury who even in these days would be likely to say: "Oh, plaintiff is a Catholic, is he? Then no verdict for him." Because Dr. Odgers holds opposite views, that is no reason why he should prejudice the jury, and that conduct of counsel ought, in common justice, to recoil upon himself, and give his opponent a new trial. But that is not all. Dr. Odgers dragged in the name of Lord Esher before the jury, and compelled me to admit that I brought an action against him, as well as one against Plumer Price, a Queen's Counsel, for slander. I was stopped in the Court of Appeal by—

Smith, M. R.: "Mr. Yeatman, you have no right to bring in the names of judges of the High Court before any of them."

Mr. Yeatman: "My Lord, I did nothing of the kind. I was

most anxious to avoid it. It was Dr. Odgers who dragged in the names, not I. I knew it would be fatal to my case with an ignorant jury. I could not go into the matter to justify my conduct as I have done in this Court, and your Lordship was one of the judges, and you know the whole circumstances."

Smith, L. J.: "Yes, and I held that the action ought never to have been brought."

Mr. Yeatman: "Certainly, that is so; but you had no alternative, and Lord Justice Lindley, who presided, expressed great sympathy with me, and regretted that the question could not be determined here, but must go to the House of Lords, because of Lord Esher's own decision (just given), in the case of *Anderson v. Gorrie*, in his own favour, '*that no matter how wickedly and vilely a judge might act when on the Bench, no action could be brought against him.*' What right had Dr. Odgers to prejudice the jury in this manner? It is worse than his attack upon me for being a Catholic."

"I only referred in my book to William Shakspeare being a Catholic to account for his having allowed the pirates to print his works, and for not having printed them himself. In his days no Catholic could sue in the Courts, just as Dr. Odgers would keep out any Catholic now from obtaining justice."

Collins, L. J., interposed: "Oh, but you are wrong, Mr. Yeatman. Shakspeare could sue and did bring many actions in many cases, for small sums. That is well known."

Mr. Yeatman: "Oh, no, my Lord. It is not proved that Shakspeare ever brought an action in his life—even my friends now admit that."

Dr. Odgers: "I do nothing of the kind. Shakspeare brought many actions."

Mr. Yeatman: "Then you have not read your libel. Churton Collins writes: 'There is no proof at all of the identification of Shakspeare's father with any John Shakspeare of whose career particulars have survived. So dense and complicated is the labyrinth of the Shaksperes, Johns, Richards, and Williams, that it is simply hopeless to disentangle them. What is postulated of one John, Richard, or William, may, with the exception of the Poet, be postulated with equal probability of another.' How can my friend say

that they have not admitted it? Why, Churton Collins stole this conclusion from my book. I brought it out clearly by bringing to light deeds and records that had never been seen, which prove the existence of several persons of the same names."

Collins, L. J.: "I am very glad to hear what you say, Mr. Yeatman. I have not had the advantage of reading your book, and I had assumed the truth of earlier writers. I must say that it is a relief to my mind that Shakspeare cannot be identified with some of the matters alleged against him."

But Dr. Odgers was not alone to blame for prejudicing the jury by this extraneous matter. Lord Russell abused the opportunity by bringing against me an odious and utterly false charge that I had been guilty of uttering a serious libel, totally unfounded, and which, if true, was very discreditable coming from myself, and he formalised his charge in these words: "Mr. Yeatman goes on to say that the Queen's Counsel of the present day are not to be relied upon. I do not agree with him. As long as I have known them they have been honest and independent, and thoroughly fair in the discharge of their duty, and I do not believe that they are less strenuous or less independent in defending their clients now, merely because they are the creation of a single man. It is alleged, I think not quite correctly, that that man, the Lord Chancellor, is not impartial. With regard to that I think the plaintiff utters a very serious libel, and which is totally unfounded, and is not very creditable coming from him." Now it is scarcely credible, but it is the fact, that there is not one word of truth in this serious charge, and, but for the fact that I obtained it from the shorthand notes which were used in this case, and which the learned counsel, Mr. Walker, courteously placed at my disposal, I could not use it in my defence; but it was clearly stated, and I challenged Dr. Odgers to say whether there was a word of truth in it, and he was dumb.

Both Lord Justices Collins and Romer asked in astonishment whether I denied making such a charge against the Bar, and I repeated my denial, and again challenged Dr. Odgers to confirm Lord Russell, but he could not.

Then Smith, M. R., interposed: "But isn't there something in

the earlier portion of the notes—he had them before him—in which it is stated that you brought a charge against the Bar?”

I said: “There is, but it is a totally distinct matter. It is a charge against a small clique for conduct which occurred years ago, long before the Coif was discontinued, and has no connection with my argument that the new system is likely to lower the tone of the Bar.”

Now this was a gross slander upon myself. I had not uttered one word against the Bar of the present day, and I never have done so. There are black sheep amongst them as there always have been and will be, and black sheep may be found amongst the ranks of every profession in the world, even that of religion; but it takes time to degrade men who have been properly educated, and the Queen's Counsel and judges of the present day have had the advantage of being reared in a happier state of society. The men who taught them and who made their characters were themselves trained in a higher school, and had higher aims and aspirations than the seekers after backstair influence; but what will be the future of the Bar? Will men continue to study and to strive to earn the true respect of the judges, or will they prefer the easier task of waiting at the tea-tables of the fair ladies, who now, it is whispered, make the appointments? I made no attack whatever against any member of the Bar at the present time, and I carefully prevented myself from making any mention of the Lord Chancellor, and said that I made no attack on him, and I meant to make none. I regret that I share the opinion of Lord Halsbury's character which most of my professional brethren hold, and which is not kept secret from anyone who cares to know it, but I have suffered professionally so acutely from his malignant feeling towards me, which he has shown by depriving me of my right to silk during the best period of my life, that I do not care to appear as one of his accusers, lest it should be attributed to personal resentment, nor can I add anything to the bitter denunciations of the Press, which would have forced any right-minded man to resign an office which he could no longer hold with dignity or with advantage to the public. My answer to Lord Russell's attack upon me is that it is utterly false. I had made no attack whatever upon the Chancellor, but I might have done so, and have been fully and absolutely justified

in doing so, and it is another, and the very strongest reason, why the profession should not be degraded by being made subservient to one man. There is also a distinct danger to the public interest, under the present system, if the Chancellor be a mean or a malignant person, that his hatred of individuals may affect his appointments; and since Lord Russell has forced me to refer to the Chancellor, and to the actions for slander which this wretched clique of barristers had compelled me to bring to defend my honour, I point out that one of these actions against Plumer Price, Q.C., was induced by the gross, and as I considered, culpable neglect of my interests by Mr. Hardinge Giffard. Unfortunately for me he was my counsel, and had accepted the brief (as counsel often do for each other) without taking a fee. That very brief had previously been in the hands of two members of my own Circuit, Fitzjames Stephen and John Mellor (who also acted without fees for me); but since they had become my enemies, because Digby Seymour, Q.C., and Plumer Price had joined our Circuit from the Northern Circuit, and I had warmly defended him from the shameful attacks of William Brett (the late Lord Esher) and Plumer Price, and mainly through my efforts, for I was the leading junior on the Midland Circuit, Digby Seymour succeeded and Plumer Price failed. Hardinge Giffard, although not engaged elsewhere (for I myself discovered him idling in the robing room), absented himself from the court, and so gave Plumer Price, as I thought designedly, though I may be wrong in this, an opportunity of making a foul attack upon my honour, which I had the greatest trouble to set right, and in doing which Giffard threw unfair obstacles in my way, but I succeeded. Price having repeated his slanders out of court, he gave me an opportunity (of which I availed myself) of dragging him before the court to answer for his misconduct. He succeeded in the action, but badly, for it was only through the barrister who had given me the information having misled me as to the exact words uttered, a matter of importance at that time, and the Lord Chief Justice Bovill, who tried the case, and who gave me the fullest opportunity to clear myself, said that I was quite right to bring my action. Sir William Brett, who was then Solicitor-General, who defended Price without taking a fee, immediately afterwards got upon the Bench himself,

and took advantage of my name being mentioned in an action to which I was not a party and had no interest, in my absence, to make a furious attack upon me, pretending that he did not know me. William Willis, Q.C., who was counsel on one side, did all he could to protect me, and wrote me manfully, expressing his sympathy, but Sir Edward Clarke, who was against me, and who at the trial in my presence had referred to me as his old friend, had not the generosity to warn or inform the judge of his "mistake," and thought to take advantage of Lord Esher's attack upon me; but it failed as far as he was concerned, for Clarke most deservedly lost his case, and Lord Bramwell most honourably protested against the unfairness of Lord Esher's conduct in attacking an absent man. I appealed to the Benchers of my Inn (of whom Lord Esher was one) for a full enquiry into my conduct, but they refused it. I subsequently brought an action against Lord Esher for this slander, giving him full opportunity to withdraw it or to defend it, but he had not the manliness to do either, and these two actions Dr. Odgers thought it decent to drag before the jury in this case, although, of course, I could not go into the question of the misconduct of these men; and on this ground alone I was entitled to a new trial, as I pressed strongly upon the court without avail.

Before I brought my action against Lord Esher, I again applied to my Inn of Court to make a full investigation of the circumstances under which he had slandered me from the Bench. I had done this instantly when it came to my knowledge, and for the purposes of my action I applied to the Inn for copies of my original letters of complaint; but, strange as it may appear, for all such documents are strictly preserved, my letters had been destroyed. Surely this was out of tenderness to Lord Esher's reputation, and not to myself. I, however, received the following very generous letter from the Treasurer:—

*Letter from the Treasurer of the Honourable Society of Lincoln's Inn.*

Lincoln's Inn Hall,

London, W.C.

18 July, 1894.

DEAR SIR,—The Bench yesterday did not see their way to make any order on your petition, certainly not from any opinion or feeling

on the merits of your case, but from the difficulty which would attend such an enquiry as you asked for. When a charge is made against anyone a simple issue is raised, which can receive a clear answer, the charge being either proved or not proved. But when a gentleman asks to have his character cleared, and there is no one to put the imputation from which he desires to be cleared in a definite form or to support the imputation by evidence, the result of the enquiry cannot be satisfactory. In these circumstances it is quite to be expected, as the fact is that there is no precedent for such an enquiry, and that it has never been considered to be a part of the duty of the Bench to enter on an investigation relating to a member of the Inn when no charge against such member is brought before it.

You will understand that the Bench does not give reasons for its decisions, and that therefore "no order" is on the official entry on your petition. But I am sure that I am not misinterpreting the view which led to that entry, and a desire was expressed that I should inform you that the decision implied no judgment whatever on the case.

Believe me to be,  
Yours faithfully,  
J. WESTLAKE,  
Treasurer.

J. Pym Yeatman, Esq.

Dr. Odgers knew the truth, and yet he discredited me with the jury in order to create a prejudice which Lord Russell did not repress. Verily the Bar, from being a noble profession, has become a sordid craft. This most serious piece of legal misdirection on the part of Lord Russell was uttered with regard to the third libel, in which it was alleged that I was a crank of the profession. To say that of any professional man is, according to the older authorities, a distinct libel, and it was so decided in the "Lancet" case (*Healey v. Wakely*), which was a case decided by the Exchequer Chamber on all fours with this. The language was of the same description, and the person libelled was a barrister, and also the editor of a journal. That authority, although decided by eight of the greatest judges of the last generation, in the greatest court of law, headed by Baron Park, is now practically reversed by the

Court of Appeal of this. Profane people may be tempted to suggest a comparison, but there is none between them. Now, on the question whether I was a crank for advocating the revival of the Order of the Coif, Lord Russell practically strongly condemned the clique of barristers who conduct the "Saturday Review," by declaring that he agreed with me and upon the very ground upon which I urged it. He said: "I think it was a great pity that the Order of the Coif was abolished. It was created unquestionably by the force of a broader consensus of opinion than is adopted by the appointment of Queen's Counsel under the modern system." Now this is the very thing I have been seeking to recover for the profession for years, not from any distrust of any particular Chancellor, but because, as I tried to explain to the Court, the Bar had perfect confidence in the integrity of the Bench; and it was a great incentive to earn their respect by acquiring sound knowledge and skill in the practice of the profession, and seeing that the judges are almost invariably taken from this rank, except a few who owe their promotion to the favouritism of some Attorney-General who has appointed them to devil for him, it is a matter of vital importance to the public, who thus obtain some guarantee for the propriety of judicial appointments.

Again, I say, Lord Russell had been most unfair to me and had misdirected the jury with regard to Messrs. Spottiswoode, who printed the first libel, and my book, the subject of it. Because I admitted that I never had any quarrel with them, he left it that they were not guilty of malice.

Lord Russell said: "Plaintiff says that Spottiswoodes are liable, although he does not charge that they have been guilty of any malice towards him. On the contrary, he speaks of them in very high terms, and as having been on very friendly terms with them; but, although he has made that admission, he seems to be a little inconsistent, and suggests that they are bound to pay damages."

Now this was absolutely throwing dust in the eyes of the jury. I did admit that I never had any difference with Messrs. Spottiswoode, and that I did not charge them with malice towards me personally, but I did not speak of them in the high terms of Lord Russell. I was never friendly with any of them personally, for I had not the honour of knowing them; but I

claim that they were liable in damages because of their negligence in printing this paper. They ought to have known that it was not carried on in the true interests of literature, but was used for most reprehensible purposes—that persons of the highest as of the lowest ranks are being continually libelled in it. They do not even spare the Queen and the Royal Family. In one article they taunt them with having been “made in Germany,” and actually republished the shameful insults to the Royal Family contained in Dr. Busche’s work on Bismarck. There is one insult to one of the Queen’s granddaughters so foul that a common groom would knock the man down who would have been unmanly enough to apply it to his sister. Dr. Odgers excused all this on the ground that he thought it “jocose.”

Again, the highest statesmen are libelled in the most shameful manner—Lord Salisbury, Lord Rosebery; and poor Mr. Gladstone was actually insulted when he lay dead in his coffin. The judges are being constantly insulted and held up to ridicule. In the number containing the last libel, in this case they are described as imbeciles, and they are attacked individually, even judges of this Court. Mr. Justice Mathews is called a snob because he uses Lord Llandaff’s coat of arms; Lord Ludlow was upheld as a liar; Mr. Justice Day’s lashes are counted up, and he is called a would-be woman flogger.

Smith, L. J.: “The judges can defend themselves. You are not called upon to defend them.”

Mr. Yeatman: “Nor am I trying to do so. It is material to my case to show the character of this paper, especially with reference to Messrs. Spottiswoode, who ought to have known, and must have known, how the liberty of the Press was being abused.”

I was proceeding to argue upon the statement in Fitzjames Stephen’s libel, that “Mr. Yeatman would most likely under any circumstances have written nonsense if he wrote anything at all,” when Smith, M. R., stopped me with this surprising query: “If I had written a book on the Common Law and had dedicated it to the late Lord Coleridge, and a critic in a review of my book had said, ‘Mr. Smith would most likely under any circumstances have written nonsense if he had written anything at all,’ would that be libellous?” I was fortunately able to preserve my gravity and an-

swer, "Certainly"; but the thought which flashed upon me nearly upset me. If he had proposed to dedicate such a book, Lord Coleridge would have said, "My dear Smith, don't be absurd; your book would certainly be nonsense, for you don't know anything about the principles of the Common Law"; and he might have added, "You do know something of pleading, but I hate it and can't understand it, and I am going, therefore, with the aid of Lord Cairns, to destroy it."

I was delighted with this blunder, for I at once cited the ruling case of *Parmeter*, decided by the Court of Exchequer in its best days, and supported by the House of Lords. Smith, M. R., was quite prepared to overrule both these tribunals; but Collins, L. J., saw that I was making his brother Smith ridiculous, for I followed this up by citing *Wakely's* (the "*Lancet*") case, where the judges held that precisely similar language to that contained in the third libel was clearly libellous when applied to a barrister. Collins, L. J., insidiously suggested, "Yes, these things are libels undoubtedly;" but did not Lord Russell himself practically tell the jury so, by leaving it to them, that they would be libellous if not fair comment, and the M. R. immediately dropped his ridiculous contention, and actually based his judgment upon that of Collins, L. J. In the course of his judgment Smith, M. R., most unfairly said the Chief Justice had dealt with the case in a way "more favourable to the plaintiff than if he had left the question whether the incriminated documents (i.e., the libels) were such as to bring the man to whom they referred into disrepute, because, in his summing up," in effect, "he told the jury that all the articles were libels, unless they were fair criticism." I had disposed of Smith's suggestion on the argument, for I had pointed out that this effect might be clear enough to the Bench, but a jury would not see it, and that this defect vitiated the summing up. Collins, L. J., saw this clearly enough, and therefore did not "add" anything to the M. R.'s judgment, or he must have dealt with the point. The M. R. either did not see it or purposely ignored it, as would appear from his monstrous assertion that Lord Russell's omission to make it clear to the jury was "more favourable" to the plaintiff. How more favourable? It might be, and was, less; it could not be more. This absurd contention he described in another place as being "tender,"

words calculated and no doubt intended to reflect upon the plaintiff's impropriety and ingratitude in complaining. The best answer to this nonsense is the complaint of the Irish poet: "It is all very well to dissemble your love, but why did you kick me downstairs?" I should not have appealed had justice been done.

*Dakeyne Cottage, Darley Dale,  
1st Sept., 1901.*

P.S.—Since writing this introduction, John Orlebar Payne, M.A., has presented me with his valuable work "The English Catholic Non-jurors of 1715," in which I find several references to the Shaksperes of Baddesly Clinton and Rowington, which are of great interest in showing that the Poet's family clung to the old faith long after the "Reformation." William Shakspeare held an estate of John Betham, alias Fowler, at Rowington, value £80; and on 1 April, 1707, George Ferrars, of Baddesly Clinton, let on lease for 31 years a messuage and lands there to John Shakspeare at £90 a year (reserved rack rent); and William Shakspeare in 1715 also rented a little dingle from Mr. Ferrars, showing that the Shaksperes still held property under these ancient feudal lords, and still, like these lords, remained Catholics, that connection having been maintained for over 300 years. Would that the present possessors of the Manor were imbued with a little more true Catholic spirit, and in skilful hands a pedigree could probably be obtained from the Ferrars muniments, which would give a complete history of the family and prove without doubt the history of the Poet's immediate ancestors. At page 22 of this introduction the author has called attention to the Coupers' pedigree; that family, which succeeded the Shaksperes in the tenure of Chatwins (their oldest known holding in Baddesly Clinton under the Ferrars), also remained at Rowington and also continued Catholics. William Cooper, of Rowington, refused to take the oath to King George I., and was compelled to register his name and estates called Oldfield; and at the same time Mary Cooper (widow of William) registered an estate in her own possession. Mr. Orlebar Payne also gives evidence that John Fowler, or Flower, of St. Thomas', Harnage, county Stafford, held a messuage at Rowington which the Shak-

speres held under him. In 1715 William Shakspeare held of him an estate called the Nechels at a rental of £30 per annum, with a moiety of the tithes of corn, etc., on Rowington, at £50 per annum; and William Shakspeare, acting with George Flower, of Rowington, were two attorneys. The Fowler family were great church robbers; this was Church property, and these Shaksperes were unquestionably near relations of the great Poet.

PYM YEATMAN.

## WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

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### NOTICES OF THE PRESS.

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#### *THE FEUDAL HISTORY OF DERBYSHIRE.*

**Notes and Queries, 7th S. III., April 30th, 1887.**

"Mr. Yeatman is a hardworking student and a man of great and varied learning. We cannot profess to agree with him on some important subjects. He attributes far more in the making of England to the Keltic element than we feel justified in doing.

"It requires some amount of courage to put before the public a county history not written on the old plan, but giving the original documents in which almost all our knowledge of local history during the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries is obtained. Such a book can never be amusing, but it contains the very marrow of history from which all future writers must derive their facts.

"The Extracts from Pipe Rolls relating to Notts and Derby are, we believe, new to students; for pedigree purposes they are almost as important as the great survey itself.

"The Extracts given from the Red Book are of great value.

"Notes from the Testa de Nevil follow. The author is inclined to fix its date, or at least the date of a portion of it, at an earlier period than we have been accustomed to allow; we believe that he is correct in this, and that his discovery is a valuable addition to our knowledge of English History. The introduction which he has written to his Extracts from that great work will be found valuable by many who take but little interest in Derbyshire history."

**Dublin Review, April, 1887.**

"Those who are interested in Derbyshire will welcome this first volume of a new history of their county. The task Mr. Yeatman has set himself, if carried out in the spirit in which it is begun, will earn the gratitude not only of those who are students of the history of that special county, but of all the genealogists. If we mistake not, the author's method of treating a county history is his own. It is not everyone who, having the ability and patience necessary for original research, would content himself with giving to the public copies of the documents he has discovered which bear on his subject and be able to resist the temptation to enlarge his stock of original material with judicious padding.

"In the two sections of the volume before us Mr. Yeatman proves that he possesses this commendable self-restraint. Only those who have had acquaintance with the work and know the difficulties which beset the path of a searcher into things unknown at the Record Office and elsewhere can appreciate the luxury of having a collection for a county history placed within reach in a printed form. Indeed, the work is so obviously one of general utility that we might have reasonably expected it would have been long ago undertaken by the officials of the Rolls Office. He draws special attention to the importance of the Pipe Rolls in tracing the pedigrees of county families, although strangely enough these records have been almost entirely overlooked by most county historians. The letterpress to the Testa de Nevil extracts is particularly of interest to the historical student, and the author throws much light on the date of the document, which is of such importance for 13th century history, about which the editor for the Master of the Rolls in 1833 appears to have had very hazy ideas.

"The printing, paper, and general get-up of the volume is all that the most fastidious can desire, and it is enriched by one of the best indexes we have ever seen, which should prove a mine of wealth to the genealogical student."

**Roach le Schonix on the Domesday Book.**

"The first eighty pages of the first volume of Mr. Pym Yeatman's *Feudal History of the County of Derby* deal with the Book of Domesday, and contain many original and weighty reflections, especially with regard to the important but vexed questions of mensuration."

**The Reliquary, N.S., Vol. I., No. 1, January, 1887.**

"These two sections of Mr. Pym Yeatman's *Feudal History of Derbyshire* form the first volume of a great work which will probably run to some ten volumes, and which will, when complete, have done infinitely more for the county of Derby than has hitherto been accomplished for any special shire.

"The information with respect to such ancient stocks as Ferrars, Hanselin, de Buron, Musard, and many others, is of the greatest value, and though it upsets many theories and statements as to family history previously advanced, is absolutely incontrovertible, for it is all based on the actual records. The indices of persons and places are full, thorough, and complete. We say no more now as there will be other opportunities of advertising to this grand work as it proceeds towards completion; but surely for such a work there will be no difficulty in finding the full roll of subscribers, for the issues of both the small and large paper copies are strictly limited."

**THE HISTORY OF THE HOUSE OF ARUNDEL.**

The author has the gratification to receive permission to publish the following very generous criticism from the pen of Mr. THOMAS HELSBY, the learned editor of the last edition of Ormerod's "History of Cheshire," who writes :

"I have had the pleasure and profit just lately of perusing an admirable book of the kind (Mr. Pym Yeatman's recent work on the Earls of Arundel), which contains a great amount of entirely original matter, with all doubtful points acutely raised and well—almost intensely—argued, showing the zeal and pains which have backed up the learned author's judicial powers and natural acumen. Of course, like all other history, this one of a family, which represents in the aggregate a vast extent of Norman and English territory, is of a tentative character, but the valuable historical and genealogical matter is purified from the ordinary dross of such productions by having had the advantage of passing through a mind evidently thoroughly capable of reducing it into that state best suited for the critical reader. Although repetitions may be found numerous enough in works of this kind, they have their use in constantly keeping before the mind of the reader facts and arguments that less tenacious and ordinary minds would let slip."

And the following from Sir Bernard Bourke, Ulster King of Arms, with reference to the whole book :

"What a wondrous store of information you have laid up for genealogists in your grand *History of the House of Arundel*. I am at every leisure moment poring over its contents."

**Extracts from the Manchester Courier of 30th March and 6th March, 1883.****FIRST NOTICE.**

"In an age when the press teems with stately folios, lumbering weak-backed quartos, and even with octavos, of History, Genealogy, and Archæology, everyone of taste and learning may be congratulated on the birth of a new folio of great originality and merit, and from the true historical standpoint. *The History of the House of Arundel*, taking us back for a period of 1,000 years, is one of those works which may well have employed the valuable hours of a member of the learned profession to which the

author, Mr. Yeatman, belongs. The judicial faculties which he has brought to bear upon his subject have, on the whole, thrown so searching a light upon some long-buried points in national history, as well as genealogical problems, that the volume will be hailed by every scholar of unbiassed mind with the cordiality it deserves. *The Early History of the House of Arundel* is that of many of the most historic families in this country and in France; and the bridge, which hitherto has been almost of the flimsiest character, is now fairly established upon the sound basis of numerous, if often fragmentary facts, worked together, it may be, by some defective arguments, by much necessary repetition, dry and wearying details, but, on the whole, with a sagacity and acumen that redeems the work from all reproach.

"Nothing can well be of greater interest to the student than the genealogical connection of this kingdom with that of our Continental neighbours and the old Duchies of Normandy and Brittany. Absolutely little of consequence was known (and this far from accurately) until the publication by the late distinguished Herald, Mr. Planché, of his *William the Conqueror and his Companions*. Sir Francis Palgrave in his work was barred from going into all those details of history so necessary to a just appreciation of the connection of the ruling houses of England and Normandy, but his eloquent sketches of the Duchy will never fade from the memory of the cultivated so long as history holds its domain in the human mind. Other gentlemen of repute have since written upon this subject more or less fully, but it seems to have remained for the present learned author to unearth from the various archives of the French Republic, and from the great stores of materials in the Pipe Rolls and the Red Book of the Exchequer, and those in the possession of the Duke of Rutland and Lord Arundel of Wardour (extending the date from the reigns of the Dukes of Normandy and regularly down to the time of Henry III. of England), a large amount of original information, which, although of so fragmentary a character in many cases as to necessitate the utmost industry, skill, and circumspection in using, has enabled Mr. Yeatman to give to the reader something approaching a sound and reliable work on this interesting period of Anglo-Norman history."

#### SECOND NOTICE.

"To handle all the multitude of facts in this book (far exceeding in number and often in abstruse significance any disclosed in the greatest *cause célèbre*), and to deal with them in a comprehensive manner, giving full effect to the numerous subtleties of meaning they often disclose, requires a grasp of intellect which can never be too fully appreciated. It is not surprising then if some should slip out of hand, and it would ill become a critic to score his page with black marks where there is abundance of merit so conspicuous to compensate for almost any degree of shortcoming, especially in a costly first edition, which cannot easily very soon be supplanted by a second.

"We cordially congratulate Mr. Yeatman upon the production of this admirable book."

**From the Bristol and Gloucester Archæological Journal, Vol. VII., Part I.,  
a criticism by Sir John Maclean, of Bicknor Court.**

"The Chapter on the settlement of the house of St. Sauveur, in the West of England, will be found of special interest to our readers, inasmuch as it gives the origin of many ancient families in the western counties, but the space at our disposal will not admit of our entering into details.

"To compile an authentic pedigree of one ancient family is no light task, but to grapple with those of many of the Norman nobility and trace their descendants respectively from original authorities is a work of Herculean labour, and Mr. Yeatman's book, when completed, will form a monument of industry and patient research. He seems to be well acquainted with the several personages who come within his range, and throughout all their shifting scenes maintains, upon the whole, a firm grasp of their individuality."

*AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF EARLY  
ENGLISH HISTORY, &c.*

LONGMANS.

**The Law Times, 24th October, 1874.**

"Such a declaration of independence as that made by the author, of the works of Freeman, Turner, Kemble, Stubbs, and others who have explored this part of our history, naturally prepared one for startling theories about well-understood facts—for a perplexity when all was plain, and doubt when all was certain. The present work outstrips all such anticipations. With all its imperfections, however, the work bears the marks of labour and ability."

**The Edinburgh Courant, 30th October, 1874.**

"It is a work of much learning, giving evidence of deep study and careful research. Mr. Yeatman's work suggests many interesting subjects of enquiry. . . . He has brought together facts which are of importance and have not received due attention. His account of the early civilisation of Britain before the Roman invasion is particularly interesting, and he has made it appear not improbable that the common law of England is derived from the ancient Britons, and has subsisted with little change under Roman, Saxon, Danish, and Norman rulers."

**The Weekly Register, 24th October, 1874.**

"Here is certainly a book calculated to bring despair to all hitherto credulous readers of our national annals. Closing it after an attentive perusal, the student is almost tempted to regard as literally true the scornful remark which branded history as little better than an old almanack."

"According to Mr. Yeatman, the Saxons of the Continent have no claim whatever to either our laws or language. They had of their own no laws, no language, no literature."

"For pointing out very clearly how something may be done in the way of working the mine of historical wealth at the Record Office, the historical students of England have, at any rate, much reason to be thankful to Mr. Yeatman, whose outspokening in the last chapter in reference to the Record Office defects commands from us in parting our heartiest commendation."

**Educational Times, 1st November, 1874.**

"This is, to say the least of it, a very remarkable book. In it the author, with rare temerity, attempts no less a task than the subversion of the whole of the received history of England anterior to the Norman Conquest."

"He has evidently studied his subject carefully, and he displays no little acumen and learning in setting forth his views."

**The School Board Chronicle, 17th July, 1875.**

"It is a stout octavo book, treating the question at great length and in much detail; and although we cannot agree with the author in many of the more important of his conclusions, we find some new light thrown upon the general question of our mixed race and our more ancient institutions, and must pronounce the book very interesting."

**The Metropolitan, 14th August, 1874.**

"Old-fashioned people who believe in *Magnall's Questions*, *Pinnock's Catechism of English History*, or in Hume and Smollett, will read this work with fear and trembling. We are not prepared to endorse all the views set forth in these pages, but the book is so immeasurably above the ordinary run of histories, which are mere repetitions of facts previously invented and judiciously arranged, that we must cordially advise every reader to study it intently."

**Evening Standard, 12th November, 1874.**

"This is a most original work, overflowing with learning, and marked throughout with a complete mastery over the most minute details of this extensive subject. By far the most interesting portion of the work is the patient research shown by the Author into the origin of the English language, and his dissertation on our Saxon literature, laws, and customs. Some of the most dangerous errors of Drs. Marsh and Latham are freely exposed, and with success; with like freedom and success the historical errors of Mr. Freeman, Lord Macaulay, and Sir Edward Creasey are brought home to their several authors."

**The Press, Philadelphia, 20th November, 1874.**

"The present volume is a remarkable example of original thought, historical research, philosophical deduction, and bold disregard of the merely traditional views of previous writers, who, taking too much for granted, have been content to travel in beaten tracts merely because they are old. To a large extent the author ignores the claims of the Saxons as founders of either the language or the laws of England, and doubts whether, indeed, they had a distinct nationality. The Work is earnest and able."

**The Law Review (English), Vol. III., N.S., p. 1139 (1874).**

"Mr. Yeatman writes with all the spirit of a true antiquary. He has an ardent appreciation of his subject, and pursues it with a keenness and a zest known only to those who have for some time indulged in antiquarian research. His work turns up much fertile soil, and though we do not concur in his main views, yet we willingly recognise the general value of his treatise. Its main object seems to be to unearth those jural elements that lie deep at the base of our laws, and to assign them, if possible, to a British rather than a Saxon origin. In this view he is undoubtedly nearer the truth than those writers—and they are legion, including the great Blackstone himself—who ascribe a Saxon origin to our Common law."

"His description of the influence of Roman jurisprudence on modern law indicates much literary grace and skill. It is clear that Mr. Yeatman is a rhetorician and a poet of no mean order. If ever he diverts his thoughts from the common law, a boundless and more fertile field will lie before him in the domain of general literature. He certainly has all the qualities that constitute a vigorous writer. There is not anything improbable in most of Mr. Yeatman's views. His work indicates great facility of composition, and an intimate familiarity with all the leading arcana of Celtic law."

**The American Law Review, Vol. IX. (1874-75), p. 123.**

"Mr. John Pym Yeatman possesses at least two qualities in common with the distinguished Englishman whose name he bears—independence and courage; without the former he could not have written, without the latter he would hardly have published the extraordinary book which forms the subject of this notice. Mr. Yeatman has produced a remarkable book."

**The Freeman's Journal (Dublin).**

"Under this unpretending title Mr. Yeatman has given to the world a very valuable book. His Introduction is not, as such works usually are, a mere transcript, more or less abridged, of the standard and approved authors on the subject. It is as remarkable for the boldness and originality of its views as it is for patient research and easy vigour of style. The Author sets out with the theory that falsehood and exaggeration have mingled so largely with the writings of English historians, more especially since the Reformation, that it has become almost impossible to recognise the truth in its twisted, distorted form. He contends that it is not in the history of the Saxons, but in the ignored history of the Celtic race, that England has to look for the origin of all that she possesses that is valuable or noble—her language, her literature, her Common Law, and her Constitution. In the course of his very able work he boldly exposes the in-

numerable misrepresentations with which English history is underlaid, and advances many strong and ingenious arguments in support of the theory he has adopted. The book is characterised throughout by industrious, laborious, and patient research, and an honest desire to discover and declare the truth at all hazards and under all circumstances."

### **THE ORIGIN OF THE NATIONS OF WESTERN EUROPE.**

Price 6s.

BURNS AND OATES, London.

"Everyone must own the clearness of style, the cogency of argument, the wealth of illustration in the way of learning, the depth of thought, and the perfect independence with which the history of England is sifted. To many, perhaps most people, the criticism on the Aryan Theory, etc., will seem like an unpleasant revelation, but we strongly suspect it will be found far from easy to answer this book."—*The Metropolitan*, 30th August, 1879.

"Mr. Yeatman is one who has had the courage to combat popular opinion on Philology. Should the statements contained in the book lying before us be true, and to bear testimony without prejudice, we think it will be no light task to prove the basis of his theory to be untrue, the Oxford School of Philology is undubitably worthless, especially Max Muller's Aryan Theory, which, in plain language, rejects the Mosaic Account of the Early History of Mankind, and holds up the Sanscrit to be the parent of all languages."—*The Auckland Times* (1st Notice), 26th Sept., 1879.

*The Auckland Times* (2nd Notice), 3rd October, 1879.

"Chapter IV. on the Sources of Positive Evidence is not only eloquent, but the very acme of trenchant argument. For instance, in the way he bowls over Mr. E. A. Freeman, a gentleman who not long ago assailed Mr. J. A. Froude most bitterly for distorting the truth."

### **THE GENTLE SHAKSPERE.**

*Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 2nd May.

"The chapters in which Mr. Yeatman deals wholly with matters genealogical are likely to be regarded as very valuable, and we think they cast much light on a subject which has hitherto been obscure. Mr. Yeatman pours forth a torrent of information, and though no great purpose is served in the end, yet the truth, however small it may be, is worth having; and it cannot be denied that Mr. Yeatman brings us nearer to it. 'Surely it is a great thing,' writes Mr. Yeatman, 'to know certainly that the Poet came of an ancient and honoured race,' and in doing so much to prove this the author has performed a service deserving warm acknowledgment.

"The chapters on the Sonnets and the Will contain such a crowd of conjectures as we have never before seen accumulated in any fifty volumes combined."

*The Whitehall Review*, 6th June.

"The book is sure to receive considerable critical attention from Shaksperian scholars, though possibly the convictions entertained by them may differ somewhat from those of the author."

*The Newsagent*, 27th June.

"An important contribution to modern Shaksperism. We have really a new and comprehensive commentary, whatever its literary merits may be, and it will certainly clear Shakspeare's memory of many misrepresentations. No doubt Mr. Yeatman's vindication may call forth criticisms of various kinds, but it is curiously interesting, and Shaksperian students may dip into it with profit."

**Vanity Fair, 20th August.**

"The Shaksperians themselves are helplessly bourgeois, not all Mr. Yeatman's genealogical learning (and he has much knowledge of Warwickshire pedigrees) has enabled him to produce an ancestor who could have had the least chance of being pricked for High Sheriff. The book contains a great deal of curious and out-of-the-way information, and should be at least glanced through by everybody who tries to look through Shakspeare's works to Shakspeare himself."

**The Morning, 11th June.**

"The patient researches into the history of the Arden and Griffin families from whom he laboriously proves the Poet's descent on the distaff side, proves that Mr. Yeatman has an enormous capacity for taking pains. It is the great purpose of *The Gent'e Shakspeare* to show that the Poet was a good Roman Catholic. Who knows? who cares? and suppose he was, what then? a fig for its importance."

**The Daily Chronicle.**

"It is a genealogical discovery, and, as a matter of fact, the author does impart a good deal of inextricably confused genealogical information, but as all sense of order, all faculty of coherent expression has been denied him he fails to convey to us which of his thousand seemingly irreverent facts is the great discovery."

**The Weekly Times and Echo, 31st May.**

"Honestly a good deal of patient industry and evident reverence for the author are spoiled by Mr. Yeatman's zeal in the cause of religion."

**The People, 7th June.**

"An important work, almost certain to beget much heated controversy. The author claims apparently with fair warrant to have made several discoveries of an extremely interesting character. It is certainly very well written, and displays no slight amount of scholarship and erudition."

**The Sportsman, 22nd June.**

"It is a work which will command the sympathies of all students of Shakspeare; it is one which merits careful study for the sake of its curious old world lore."

**The Publishers' Circular, 1st August.**

"The author proceeds to throw much new light on the life of the dramatist, his pedigree, his friends, his marriage, and many other subjects. One of the principal points made is the insistence on the fact that Shakspeare was a Roman Catholic; a fact which accounts for many things which the commentators and biographers have not been able to understand. Mr. Yeatman took just three weeks to write his book—a truly marvellous performance. The volume is a valuable addition to the biography of our greatest dramatist."

**The Season, July.**

"The admirers of the myriad-minded man will read with considerable interest the conflicting arguments of the two schools of Shakspeare's critics which are here set forth before us. On the subject of Shakspeare's scholarship, Mr. Yeatman expressed himself delightfully concerning those pedants who are wont to measure erudition by the foot-rule of the classics.

"The author has given much time and pains to hunting up the Poet's pedigree; his details throw a further light on the hitherto somewhat nebulous record. The subject is treated at length, and the family history of the Griffins and Shaksperes gone into with much care and completeness. The whole book is full of interest, for it deals not only with the defence and

culogy of the greatest genius we possess, but it brings with it an atmosphere of the sixteenth century, its religious, political, and literary outlook, and shows the temper of the hour."

**The Weekly Sun, 26th July.**

"Mr. Yeatman went full tilt at some of his hero's commentators who had not so high an opinion of Shakspeare's susceptibility and innocence of feeling as he himself entertains."

**The Catholic News, June.**

"Mr. Yeatman proves conclusively that our great national Poet was a member of the true faith."

**The Shaksperian, 15th August.**

"The less a reader knows of its subject the better chance he has of appreciating it. Mr. Yeatman found Donnelly's books nonsense; perhaps he has made a second such discovery by re-reading his own volume." Then is set out at great length some of the opinions and conclusions advanced by Mr. Yeatman, which the sapient critic declares are also his own.

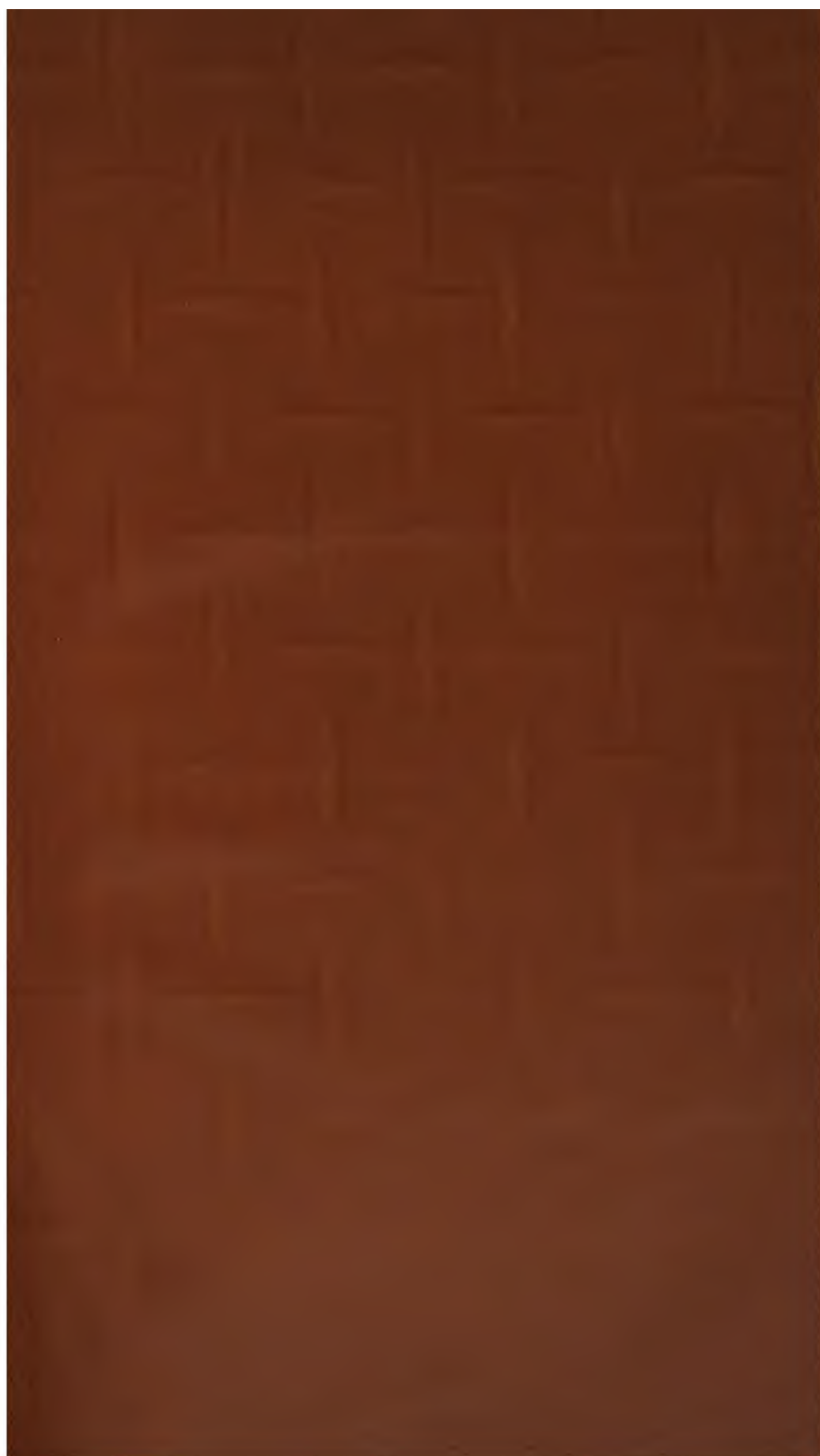
**The Catholic Times, 22nd May.**

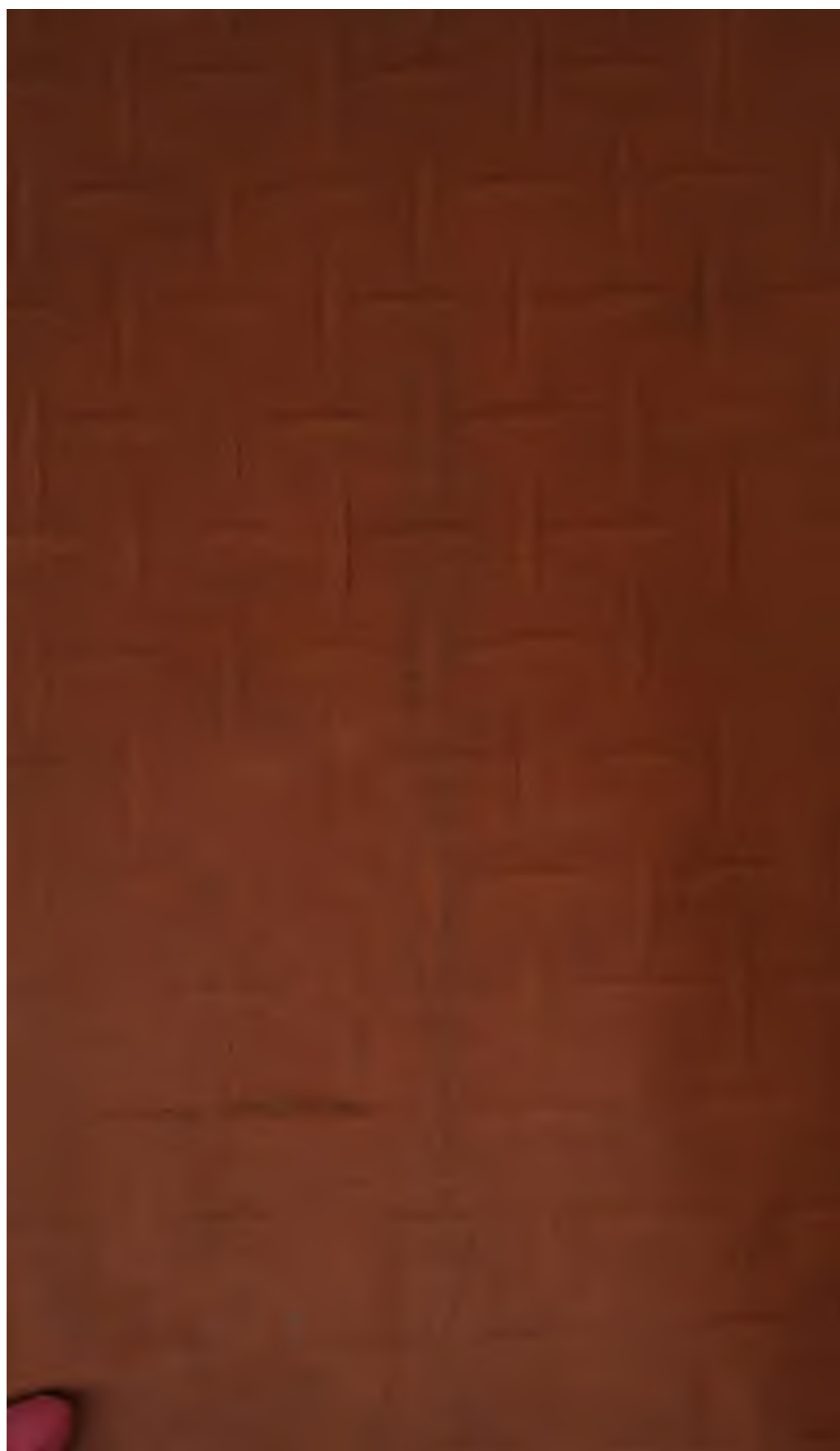
"Many will doubtless approve of the publication of this work; rather an onerous task, it is true, but the author has presented us with a very capable work. He proves two things—that Shakspeare was a Catholic, and that he wrote Shakspeare."

"It has been remarked by several writers that the oration of Cranmer in *Henry VIII.*, over the new-born Princess Elizabeth, is totally unworthy of Shakspeare, both in its wording and disgusting flattery. Spedding said the singularity of *Henry VIII.* is that while four-fifths of the play are occupied in matters which are to make us incapable of mirth, the remaining fifth is devoted to joy and triumph, and ends with universal felicity. Mr. Yeatman proposes a remarkable explanation: that Shakspeare wrote only the first four acts, the play terminating with the death of Catherine of Arragon. He justly argues that in that condition Shakspeare would be certain to lose his head, and that an adapter, to soften the play down and render it safe to perform it, added the fifth act. His view on the subject is striking. This the author shows more strongly by printing the first four acts completely. He has collected a great deal of proof from old documents and pedigrees. Mr. Yeatman has a clear and forcible style which carries conviction with it; but we are inclined to think he often gains a point more by force of language than by tangible proof. We commend the book as one which will be most interesting to all who love—and who does not?—the immortal works of the Bard of Avon."

**The Era, 12th September.**

"We welcome many of Mr. Yeatman's conclusions as to events in the early career of Shakspeare, and regard many of his theories as highly ingenious. Halliwell-Phillips is credited by the author with the collection of valuable facts, and with the employment of able men to search for him; but they did not search in the right places. This was left for Mr. Yeatman to do. He scrutinised the rolls of the adjoining parishes of Wroxall and Baddesly Clinton, where he found much that should be known to the students of Shaksperian archæology. Shakspeare, Mr. Yeatman avers, was a Catholic, and it must be admitted that he advances many strong arguments in support of his contention. His remarks on the play of *Henry VIII.* are well worth reading. A most interesting chapter is the Early History of the Shakspeare Family."









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